

GESTALT WORK FOR THE ACTOR:
A DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION

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Gestalt Work for the Actor is a documentary about Dr. Renee Vincent's Gestalt acting exercise. Students are trained to recall powerful emotions and then employ the conjured passions into performance. This documentary examines the Gestalt acting exercise and what benefits it affords actors.

The accompanying production book explains the production processes: preproduction, production, and postproduction, as well as the theoretical approaches used in the documentary.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER 1: APPROVED PROPOSAL	1
CHAPTER 2: PREPRODUCTION RESEARCH	9
CHAPTER 3: RECONCEPTUALIZATION BEFORE PRODUCTION	20
CHAPTER 4: THE INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRODUCTION	23
CHAPTER 5: PRODUCTION	44
CHAPTER 6: POSTPRODUCTION	48
CHAPTER 7: EVALUATION OF COMPLETED WORK	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY	71
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	75
APPENDIX B: BUDGET	82
APPENDIX C: RELEASES	85
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW LOGS AND TRANSCRIPTS	90
APPENDIX E: PAPER EDIT	194

CHAPTER 1

The following chapter contains the original proposal for this thesis project which was approved by the graduate committee members. The purpose of this proposal is to present information about film's subject and to explain the planned logistics of the documentary production. It is not intended to be an academic document but rather the first step of the documentary production process. Theories, procedures, and analysis are explored in detail in the final thesis report.

APPROVED PROPOSAL

This is a proposal for a thirty-minute documentary video about an acting workshop which employs psychotherapy exercises to train actors to use real emotions in their performances.

The main subject of the film will be Dr. Renee Vincent who is currently a professor of Theatre at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. She is a practitioner and teacher of a performance technique known as "The Method." Dr. Vincent has developed a series of exercises and training tools which are based upon Gestalt Psychotherapy. Her students are trained to recall powerful emotions and then employ the conjured passions into performance. This film's paramount goals are to capture this dynamic procedure on film, to explore and explain its methodology, and convey the history and development of this unique therapy application.

Need

There is a need for such a procedure within the acting profession. Method Acting, and the techniques used to exercise it, is often viewed as both a refined skill wielded by artisans and as an obsession of those who are at best thought of as unprofessional. The more conservative elements of theatre have viewed Method acting as a rejection of technique, discipline, and form; a descent into self-indulgence and egotism. The application of Dr. Vincent's exercise to augment Method Acting attempts to provide a balance between the conservative and liberal viewpoints in the acting spectrum. Dr. Vincent's exercise attempts to resolve conservative concerns while respecting the liberal style, passion, and raw power that has made Method Acting so dynamic. By reconciling these factions, by using the best of what they both have to offer, this technique is an effort to bring order to chaos, to harness and discipline the creative energies of acting.

Organization

The majority of the film will be a presentation of Dr. Vincent's system. Set in an acting workshop, she will first deliver a short lecture to the workshop's audience, composed of theatre students. Dr. Vincent will explain what she will be showing them, how it developed, how she has used it, and how they can benefit from it. Then she will work with three actors and "Gestalt" them with her process and help them develop the performances of their monologues and scenes.

The film will also feature four main characters. Dr. Vincent is the main subject and content expert. The three workshop participants are all college graduates with majors in theatre and are extensively experienced in performance. Renee Ackerman is an actress, a high school theatre teacher, and a director. Ethan Ward and Julie Lewis are both professional actors.

The film will feature the subjects in pre and post interview settings. All four characters will be interviewed individually before and after the workshop. The two separate interview sessions will illustrate significant changes in the actors' knowledge and attitudes when the editing contrasts the before and after footage. During the interviews the subjects will express their attitudes and opinions towards The Method and this exercise. They will also recreate the events of the workshop, describing what will occur or what has happened at each moment to provide commentary about the events. This audio source will be used as narration for the film. Footage from the workshop will be inserted over their descriptions, serving as a "flash forward" to illustrate what they are describing.

In addition to their individual interviews, the three actors will also be interviewed as a group. This will provide them the advantage of forming cooperative opinions through support and confirmation from the other members. Ultimately, the film's essay will be constructed from these interviews. Since the interviews will all be directed along parallel lines of dialogue, the isolated statements of the individuals and the group can be resegmented and arranged into the appearance of deliberation with a linear progression following the development of an idea or the evolution of an issue. The interviews will ask each character the same series of questions. They will be composed and conducted so that each of the characters provides similar statements that reflect the film's arguments and support the film's goals. From there, the most succinct and expressive statements will be selected. In the association of these statements through editing, each character can share in the delivery of the expository essay. Through this approach, the exposition is given variety from each character's individual impressions and style of expression. Dr. Vincent's lecture will also be material used for this assembly since the film will endeavor to focus primarily on the workshop's action.

The conclusion of the film will illustrate to what degree the three actors implement this procedure in their private and professional careers to meet their theatre needs. Renee

Ackerman, the theatre teacher, will be profiled to discover what parts of the exercise she incorporates into her directing and teaching. Ethan and Julie will be followed to record how they use the system in their professional acting.

Form

The structure of the film will center around the acting workshop where all of the action takes place and where the characters confront their challenges. Footage of the workshop will act as home for the film, focus of the film will always return there after features about other footage. This additional footage will include the interviews with the subjects, as well as scenes of them interacting in their professional settings and as they put the workshop's training into practice in their careers. These shots will be used over the character's interviews to illustrate the introduction of each character and place them into recognizable, familiar contexts to which the film's audience can relate. After the introductions of characters, subjects, and other expository matters of time, place, and various contexts, the film will shift focus to the workshop. As needed, the interviews and outside footage will continue to be interwoven with this action. The action will often pause to reveal a different perspective or to provide information about a particular issue or character before returning to continue the action and progression of the characters in the workshop. The workshop will be designed to provide editorial breaks in between each actor's session, in between each part of each session, and in between the various subject headings of Dr. Vincent's lecture to the workshop audience.

The structure of this documentary will follow closely the structure of an event-centered film. The action will illustrate all of the elements of an important occasion or incident: preparation, anticipation, action, and then reflection. The actors will be shown preparing and rehearsing, Dr. Vincent will be composing her strategy, the stage hands will set the scene, and

then the action will take place and the event will unfold. Then the main element of the film's structure builds to a climax centered on the workshop. In addition, elements of a journey will also become strong characteristics of this piece. The journey in this case serves as sort of metaphor to represent the characters as they evolve from states of ignorance and inability through a transcendence into states of knowledge and skill. The film will travel with the actors as they embark on a voyage of discovery, a search for intellectual challenges, and a pilgrimage for spiritual exploration. The film will follow the characters and illustrate this personal evolution they will experience during the filming of this documentary. Their hazards, victories, and rewards of their journey will be chronicled by the film.

The main viewpoint of the film will strive be more 'subjective.' That is, the film will present the point of view from the perspective of Dr. Vincent and the acting workshop participants. Dr. Vincent and her positions will be displayed in ample coverage from the interviews to the workshop. The perspectives of the actors will be portrayed in the same manner. They will all have opportunities to elaborate, justify, and defend their viewpoints will be expanded upon as the film follows them deeper into their lives, outside of the film's issues and the workshop context, and as they deal with the ramifications of the workshop's experience on them.

Style

The film may most resemble an educational, promotional, or public relations film. It will be designed to promote this "brand" of acting, and it will increase the publicity of this exercise. "Better acting" will be demonstrated in the film as a service that Method Acting, and especially the exercise and process of Dr. Vincent. One of the most persuasive elements of the film will be a high level of identification. The film's audience will directly identify with the needs, objectives,

and experiences of the characters because as actors they share many of the same obstacles and objectives. The audience's subsequent empathy with the characters' conflict will make the statement of the film's essay more persuasive to 'sell' the exercise to the audience.

The construction of the film's voice will be another persuasive element to convince the audience to seriously consider the statement of the film. Due to the prominent use of the characters as expository devices, the narration and explanation they provide is from a sympathetic point of view that will bring a personal warmth to the film's statement. The cold, anonymous neutrality of the exposition and narration is removed by the absence of an invisible, omniscient narrator character. The characters will be allowed to tell the story in their own words. By making the narration and the exposition the responsibility of the characters it gives the film's voice a personal, candid, and honest context. This viewpoint is more sympathetic for the audience because the characters appear to be speaking directly to them, not edited or filtered through a authoritarian narrator. The candor of this private conversation between the audience and the characters will be very persuasive.

Additionally, the film also seeks to build and improve the image of using Method Acting and this Gestalt exercise as a supplemental addition to it. The film's objectives are to foster the notion that following the philosophy of Method Acting and using Dr. Vincent's exercise is in the audience's best interest. The essay and narrative portions of the film will be structured to support and defend the film's argument. They will thoroughly illustrate and weight evidence supporting the film's argument and dismiss or refute contradictory evidence. The film will stop short of efforts to unnecessarily glamorize the weaker proof of the argument. The film will not defame or vilify those who are not in agreement with the film's argument. It will not be a propaganda piece to disparage Method Acting's critics.

The "call to action" that promotional films make will be subdued in this film. The action called for to be taken may be implicit instead of blatant, but recruitment into the Method Acting

philosophy will definitely be solicited. Primarily, the film seeks to be an educational tool. The illustration of Dr. Vincent's system will serve to instruct, teach, and train actors and directors in the use of this exercise. The film provides a public service for the theatre community in three ways. First, the film will provide instruction in implementing an acting system that is effective, efficient, and adaptive. Second, by instructing how to safely use Dr. Vincent's system, this film also seeks to serve the theatre public by advocating the increase of the number and potency of safety features within the existing system so that The Method is then made safer. Finally, the film serves the theatre public by attempting to reconcile controversial issues with the communication of accurate information.

Production Schedule

Preproduction

July 1998	Solicit workshop actors
August 1998	Solicit Dr. Vincent
September 1998	Solicit TWU
November 1998	Confirm Dr. Vincent
January 1999	Choose graduate committee members, Research topics
February 1999	Confirm TWU, Confirm workshop actors, Confirm Dr. Vincent's arrangements, Turn in proposal and degree plan, Scout locations, Secure equipment, Secure budget, Script interview questions, Compile shot lists, Solicit crew
March 1999	Confirm crew

Shooting schedule

March 12 & 13	Shoot first interview with workshop actors
March 18	Shoot Dr. Vincent's Interview
March 20 12:00pm	Shoot workshop
March 20 4:00pm	Shoot workshop actors auditioning for Shakespeare In The Park
March 24	Shoot second interview with Renee, shoot her teaching theatre
March 25	Shoot second interview with Julie
March 26	Shoot second interview with Ethan
March 27	Shoot group interview with workshop actors
May ?	Shoot workshop actors rehearsing

Postproduction

April/May 1999	Log shots, transcribe footage, paper cut, assemble first rough cut
June/July 1999	Assemble second rough cut, assemble final cut, write final report, screen film, defend thesis.
August 1999	Graduate

CHAPTER 2

PREPRODUCTION RESEARCH

Basics of Method Acting

Method Acting arose from a series of theories which were pioneered by Konstantine Stanislavsky. Stanislavsky was one of the founding members of the Moscow Art Theatre in 1898.(Felner, 1990 & Brockett, 1991). Around 1909 he began outlining a system for actors to have practical methods for emotional creativeness. In 1909 he founded the First Studio to experiment with his hypothesis and flesh out his theories into workable exercises.(Grote, 1989). Stanislavsky saw that the best way for an actor to build characterization was by duplicating similar feelings of their imaginary character after copious observation of reality as the basis for such feelings. Inner justification should be sought for every action performed onstage. From this, the “magic if” contemplation was formed: actors maintain that, IF they were this person faced with these situations, then their behavior would be appropriate in that context. “Emotion memory” was the concept which had the largest impact on acting. This process allowed actors to relate the unfamiliar dramatic situation to some parallel emotional situation in their own lives.(Grote, 1989 & Brockett, 1991). This investment of the actor’s self into the role allowed the actor to deepen the emotional bond with the character and its dramatic situations.(Albright, 1967).

Between 1923 and 1930 two of Stanislavsky's actors, Maria Ouspenskaya and Richard Boleslavsky, left to lead the American Laboratory Theatre in New York. There, the Stanislavsky system was taught. (Goldfarb, 1998). Among the 500 students were Stella Adler, Lee Strasberg, and Harold Clurman. These three went on to found the Group Theatre, the most distinguished troupe of the 1930's. Strasberg began adapting the basic theories of Method Acting into a working application. Stanislavsky's "system" of acting would now be re-labeled and officially termed by this group as "Stanislavsky's Method" (Felner, 1990 & Brockett, 1991). Theatrical realism dominated the philosophy of theatre for decades and helped to fuel this incipient branch of the Method Acting. Elia Kazan, a member of the Group Theatre, went on to found the Actors Studio in 1947. Under Strasberg and Kazan, the search for psychological truth rooted in a character's inner motivations reached a fevered pitch. The demand on the actor to increase his commitment to more personal emotional investment began to grow ever larger. The number of acceptable Method tools began to narrow. Soon, "emotion memory" became a pillar of the Method Acting philosophy. Actors were taking greater physical and emotional risks and staking more of themselves and their own psyche within their characters. (Albright, 1967 & Brockett, 1991).

Strasberg's interpretations of Method have been viewed by many experts as simplistic exaggerations which place too much emphasis on only one characteristic of Stanislavsky's multi-faceted system. (Brockett, 1991 & Grote 1989). This has done little to deter the popular misconception of Method Acting which promotes the Strasberg model of extremism. That image in popular culture was forged by Strasberg through his cultish group and his dogmatic rhetoric. He saw emotional memory as the keystone to Method Acting, and it remains the defining characteristic of the Method today. It is why the acting community has fragmented into dozens of polar philosophies concerning Method Acting. (Brockett, 1991, Felner, 1990 & Goldfarb, 1998).

The Development of Gestalt Theories and Psychotherapies

Around 1912, a group of doctors began challenging the prevalent theories of structuralism, shaking the notion that conscious experience could be broken down into elements. Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Kohler, and Kurt Kofka were the key members of the new movement. Gestalt was originally designed to help explore and explain the way humans perceive environmental stimulus to achieve 'awareness.' The German word 'Gestalt' means 'pattern,' 'shape,' or 'configuration.' (Davis, 1995 & Perls, 1951). Wertheimer began by defining the process of the visual illusion of apparent motion (the basis for motion picture perception). The aggregate philosophy of early Gestalt theory is that our perception of a whole is different from our perception of the individual stimuli which comprise it. The whole of our cognition of reality is greater than the sum of all its component experiences. (Davis, 1995 & Perls, 1951).

Gestalt soon moved from the field of medical and anatomical Psychiatry into the therapeutic and theoretical world of Psychology. A German couple, Fritz and Laura Perls, are credited with the evolution of Gestalt from its basic theoretical models into a working Psychotherapy in the 1950's. The psychologists fled the Nazi Germany and in South Africa they fleshed out theories into therapy through their research and experiments. Laura developed Gestalt's signature movement and interpersonal contact in the experimental sessions and Fritz began evolving all of their findings into a unified whole called 'concentration therapy.' Later, 'Gestalt' would replace the term 'concentration therapy.' (Davis, 1995 & Perls, 1951). In New York, they met Dr. Paul Goodman, a popular and prolific playwright and Doctorate of Aesthetics. The Perls, along with Goodman, authored the definitive statement on Gestalt: *Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality*. The Perls and Goodman were avid theatre patrons. Goodman was closely involved with Judith Malina, a

member of the Actor's Studio and the founder of The Living Theatre. Goodman counseled Malina and other actors in extensive Gestalt therapy sessions. This was one of the tentative, nascent origins of theatre's co-option of Gestalt psychotherapeutic techniques for use in acting and directing. (Davis, 1995, Perls, 1951, & Tytell, 1995).

Gestalt psychotherapy is centered around a close therapist/client relationship. The aggressive therapy seeks to "excite" the patient on many levels, requires direct contact between client and therapist, and uses experimentation and exercises for "direct experience" which are usually manifested as a violent catharsis. Its efforts are aimed at expanding the patient's "immediate awareness." The therapy, seen as and referred to as an experiment, develops the patient's skills at bringing himself into various levels of "focused" and "artful" awareness. (Davis, 1995 & Perls, 1951).

The theoretical concept of "figure/ground formation" describes how consciousness selects what is prominent and conspicuous for perception and filters out the background. Therapy manipulates this process. The perception filtering process is circumvented, liberating the patient from his framework of consciousness. This adjustment "tapers concentration," increases raw perception, and heightens awareness. The stimulus that is deemed unnecessary for perception and unfit as material with which to construct reality and consciousness is allowed to flow unfettered. The experiences garnered by the patient from total immersion into their own background become the basis for further therapeutic exploration. (Davis, 1995 & Perls, 1951).

Dr. Vincent's Gestalt Technique for Method Acting

Dr. Vincent was first exposed to Gestalt exercises in 1976 while studying for her Master's of Fine Arts degree at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. There she was trained by Nicki Flacks and Dale Rose, who happened to be a member of The Living Theatre.

Dr. Vincent's program is similar in many aspects to a psychotherapy exercise known as "Acting Into Discharge" where the subject is prompted into reactions of embarrassment, fear, anger, and grief through a process of physical actions and verbal statements. (Davis, 1995).

In either the classroom setting or during a play's rehearsal, the procedure begins by isolating the subject in front of the group and having him perform his selected piece. The instructor then joins the actor onstage and begins some relaxation and trust exercises. The instructor examines the actor's posture and attitude. The instructor touches the actor on the back of the legs and adjusts his posture. The actor is instructed as to how to manipulate and rhythm his breathing.

In Dr. Vincent's Gestalt exercise, one of the strongest instigators of the trusting relationship between the instructor and subject is direct contact; reassuring touches and embraces on the back of the head, neck, torso, shoulder, and gentle strokes on the cheeks and jaw. The actor then says, "Hi," or "Hello" to the group, or to each individual. This is combined with long, silent pauses. The instructor now provokes the actor to his first discharge by poking fun at the rest of the group or the situation, by sympathizing with the plight of the actor, or with a nonsensical blurb. The instructor and the group then encourage jocularity by joining in and supporting it.

The instructor moves a few feet away and has the actor begin exercises with repeated mimetic movements and mantra-like phrases. With palms facing out front, the actor pushes away from himself firmly while simultaneously stamping his feet and saying, "Go away." The

action and phrase are repeated, each time after the instructor's prompt. Beats, moments of pause, are left in between each stomp and shout to punctuate the moment. The action has little force and the line delivery is soft. After a few repetitions, slight aggravation is evident. The rhythm of the stomps and shouts is directed to quicken and the force of each delivery builds accordingly. The attitude of the actor turns into frustration, then anger, and then an explosion of rage. After a thorough expression, the instructor then moves in and places her hands onto the actor's back, torso, shoulders, head, or face. Some involved restraint may be called for to subdue the actor. The actor is then brought down with reassuring words, compliments, platitudes, etc.

The next set of repeated motions are begun. The actors hands are made to open and close in constant repetition of a grasping motion. The actor then repeats the phrase, "I need." The instructor holds one of the actor's hands as it opens and closes and holds the actor at the small of his back. Eventually, the instructor backs away and leaves the actor alone. The action and phrase are repeated. The emotional responses range from seriousness, to somberness, then despair, and grief, to total collapse with wailing, moaning, crying, and screaming. The instructor then steps in, holds the actor, and calms him down.

After calming down, the subject is left alone and the instructor steps back. The actor then begins his monologue or scene, this time with a readily accessible arsenal of emotions to exploit and express in the scene. Afterwards, the session is discussed within the group.

Dr. Vincent thoroughly addresses issues of control and institutes numerous safety measures within her exercise. She is most strict in demanding that her students who participate in the exercise have had extensive acting training. Specifically, she now makes sure that they have studied with her for a least one year so that she can observe who is qualified to be a candidate for the procedure. She takes into consideration many factors including maturity, mental health, emotional stability, and attitude. Dr. Vincent takes advantage of her year of

training with the student to prepare and groom him for the rigorous demands that the exercise will require. That way she makes sure that he has developed the necessary skills to successfully complete and benefit from the additional training. Most importantly, Dr. Vincent has developed her own high ethical standards as to how the instructor/student relationship should operate. She believes that the exercise is a journey for both the subject and the guide. Her guidelines ensure high levels of trust and mutual respect. She also advocates a healthy sense of adventure and a strong level of commitment from all involved, especially the audience. Lately she has entered into a partnership with the school's doctors and counselors, fully disclosing to them her intents, objectives, and procedures. She receives from them their expert advice and recommendations to use as resources in which to better enhance and augment the safety and effectiveness of the exercise. The department chair, as well as the school's dean, are all made aware of what she is doing. All concerns of liability and insurance are sorted out as safety procedures are agreed upon and implemented.

Pre-production research

Pre-production research of the feasibility for this documentary began in July of 1998. I proposed the idea to several theatre alumni from Texas Wesleyan University (TWU). They were supportive of the idea, gave me generous feedback, and promised to participate in the project. Julie Lewis, Renee Ackerman, and Ethan Ward agreed to be subjects of the workshop that would be featured in the documentary.

I was a student of the documentary's subject, Dr. Vincent. She taught acting at TWU from the Fall of 1991 through the Spring of 1993. In class, Dr. Vincent referred to the exercises she was conducting on us as "Gestalt." She never disclosed any more information to us about this exercise, only a general date as to when we would be put through it. I was the first student

at Wesleyan to experience her Gestalt exercise, in the Fall of 1991 and again in the Spring of 1993. She used the technique with colleagues and other actors for several years, but the instructor-student relationship has much more intricate dynamics of cooperation, power, and responsibility. It is likely that I was the first student she performed the exercise upon.

The impact upon my peers and myself was dramatic and provocative. I found the exercise to be quite exciting, successful, and liberating. I wanted others to know about it, and I felt a documentary would be the best vehicle for accomplishing that. Additionally, I had a larger target in mind. Techniques such as this that are associated with Method Acting have a mystique that the acting industry promotes. This mystique fosters legends, propaganda, and a general misunderstanding. I believed that a documentary would resolve some of the controversy surrounding general negative impressions some people have about Method Acting and training techniques similar to this one.

Production Research

The next phase of pre-production focused on actual production research. I began to assemble all of the materials, equipment, and resources needed to produce the documentary. I started by introducing the idea to Joe Brown, Dean of Fine and Performing Arts and the Chair of the Theatre Department at TWU. He agreed to provide me with the resources of his department including facilities, budget, and personnel. Throughout the Fall of 1998 I continued negotiations with Dr. Vincent. I discovered what she was willing to do and together we came to a consensus about how to incorporate the procedure on film.

Funding

Funding for the documentary production was agreed upon between Joe Brown and myself. The TWU Theatre Department would provide location facilities for shooting, personnel as needed for security, and location management. The TWU Theatre department would also provide round trip airfare for Dr. Vincent from North Carolina to Fort Worth. TWU provided Dr. Vincent with a stipend, paid for her hotel, and loaned her use of a vehicle. I provided the rest of the funds for production including equipment, crew, production transportation, tapes, batteries, food, drinks, etc. (See Appendix B).

Distribution Possibilities/Audience

The original proposed audience for this film was primarily to be theatre teachers and students studying acting and directing. The intent of the film was to inform people of this technique and what a powerful tool it can be. It would serve an instructional video for those planning to be Method instructors and would instruct actors in the use of this method. The marketing venues for this film are numerous when considering the ease of which a curriculum could be written around the objectives of the film. It would be directly distributed with lesson plans on the instruction of Gestalt Method to acting studios, conservatories, theatres or to the Fine Arts departments of universities and high schools. Secondly, the film would promote those in theatre supporting a balanced acting approach between system and method styles. The film would try to persuade the conservative theatre factions who view Method Acting as radical into a more moderate stance.

The intended audience has been somewhat re-evaluated. Since the focus of the documentary has backed away from the historical explanations of Gestalt Psychology and

Method Acting, and since the process is less specifically explained than originally planned, the film takes on less of an instructional or educational role and more of an illustrative one. The film could be screened by a class of actors to show how emotional training can be implemented in actor training or how psychology in theatre can be explored.

The current intended audience reflects more realistic distribution possibilities of the documentary. I made this film primarily for people, mostly actors, who were frustrated when I would try to describe the Gestalt training method. I felt that such a visual aid would be more descriptive about what I was attempting to explain. Additional target audiences include teachers and students studying acting. The final product might be distributed to theatres, conservatories, schools, universities, and colleges which feature extensive, high-level training for actors. Of course, the distributor would be conscious of the film's graphic content and pay close attention to which audiences screened the film. The areas of concerns about the documentary's content are, for examples, the extreme emotions and situations the characters are put through, they also deal with adult concepts such as rape, and there is a significant amount of R-rated profanity in the workshop dialogue. Audiences to avoid include young actors who might attend any public high school or junior high, and any religious non-secular schools and theatres. Secondary audiences for the film could lie in the psychology and theatre fields. It might interest historians specifying in the field of psychology and its development as a cultural phenomenon, an institution, and unique applications of the work. Theatre researchers might find this interesting because it demonstrates how theatre incorporates tools and concepts from other fields.

Goals of the documentary

The goal of the documentary is to record the process of Dr. Vincent's Gestalt Work For Actors and to also record interviews with her and the subjects of the workshop to reflect their knowledge and opinions about the exercise. During production and post production I have backed off of the persuasive elements of the film. My intention to resolve the controversy surrounding method acting was too far sighted for the film's abilities. My goals to convert critics of the exercise became less important as space in the film increasingly came at a higher premium. There was not time enough for the film to explain both the exercise's process and the history of its various origins. My intention to target the film to a more informed audience, those who knew about advanced acting techniques. Including an explanation of the controversies surrounding Method Acting would have been redundant because that audience would already be familiar with the issues. The film's central focus has become its goal: to create a portrait of Dr. Vincent and to illustrate her methods, especially the procedure of her exercise.

CHAPTER 3

RECONCEPTUALIZATION BEFORE PRODUCTION

Many more reconceptualizations of the project took place before production. The largest reconceptualization was the abandonment of the historical reviews of Method acting and Gestalt psychology. Because no concrete connection could be established between Dr. Vincent's exercise and Gestalt psychology, the topic was no longer relevant to the documentary.

The plans outlined in the proposal included an organization around all four characters. I had planned to interview them each individually both before and after the workshop. The two separate interview sessions would have illustrated any changes the actors experienced through comparison and contrast in the film's editing. In addition to their separate interviews, the three actors were to have been interviewed collectively. They were to be given the opportunity to express themselves as a group in a setting that would have provided them the advantage of forming cooperative opinions through support and confirmation from the other members. Additional materials were to include footage of the subjects interacting in their professional settings and later as they put the workshop's training into practice in their careers. This footage was to be used over the character's interviews to illustrate the introduction of each character and place them into recognizable, familiar contexts that the film's audience could relate to. This footage is similar to the original planned conclusion of the film which would have illustrated to

what degree the three actors now implement this procedure in their private and professional careers to meet their theatre needs. Renee Ackerman, the theatre teacher, was to be profiled to discover what parts of the exercise she incorporates into her directing and teaching. Ethan and Julie were to be followed to record how they use the system in their professional acting. As Dr. Vincent and her exercise became more important subjects to the documentary, these other planned shoots became increasingly marginalized until they were discarded from the production schedule.

I had had another re-evaluation with what I had previously thought of as a great idea. My plan was to interview a local Gestalt therapist as she reviewed the videotaped workshop. She would then critique Dr. Vincent's activities in an on-camera interview. That footage would be juxtaposed against Dr. Vincent's statements to either support or contradict her claims. With Dr. Vincent not being fluent in Gestalt psychology terms and concepts, it is possible that the additional footage would have painted Dr. Vincent in a bad light and would have run counter to my agenda to sell her procedure to the documentary's audience. Therefore, I performed yet another re-evaluation and did not pursue the interview.

The plan for audience interviews was also abandoned. I had planned to interview the workshop audience after they had witnessed the exercise. These short interviews would seek out their opinions about the procedure and these statements were to be edited into the film. I feel that these so-called "man-on-the-street" interviews are weak. Their testimony would have been less sophisticated than the other characters. There was also only one audience member who attended the workshop. It was fortunate that I was not depending on their impressions to be used in the film for I would have been disappointed.

Lastly, I had planned to shoot some material of Renee Ackerman using the exercise with her high school students. If needed, I was willing to stage the scene in order to get the desired effect. This was all before I knew the opinions of the workshop subjects regarding the

exercise and its use in public school education. I soon got a glimpse when I described my intentions to Ethan and he vehemently protested with the phrase, "That's irresponsible!" I then realized that those shots would go against the responsible use of the exercise that I was advocating.

CHAPTER 4

THE INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRODUCTION

Theories

The texts which revealed the most relevant theories regarding Documentary were Alan Rosenthal's *Writing, Directing, and Producing Documentary Films and Videos* and Michael Rabiger's *Directing the Documentary*, 3rd edition. Rabiger points out that the modern academic theories of documentary originated in other unrelated fields such as history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and philosophy, but their relevance to Documentary analysis is hardly marginal (p. 310). The three theories that best relate to this project are 1) issues of representation, 2) issues of authorship, and 3) the purpose of documentary.

The first basic aim of Documentary is to bear witness. Rabiger states that, "What is central to Documentary's spirit [is] the notion that documentaries explore actual people and situations. John Grierson, the founding father of Documentary, defined Documentary as 'creative treatment of actuality'" (Rabiger, p. 3). And Rabiger goes on to support Rosenthal's claim that Documentary is to bear witness. In the past "the great mass of humanity has left nothing save what can be glimpsed in the records of their time. Of humble individuals one can learn nothing unless they tangled with the law or did something remarkable. Their collective history was

written for them, if recorded at all, by their masters, who were neither expert nor unprejudiced” (Rabiger, p. 3). Today, the documentarian’s call is to “use cinematic language- the twentieth century’s great contribution to universal understanding- to create a record... to pose ideas and questions... to convey what we see and feel. We can propose the causes, effects, and meanings, of the life that we are leading. We can bear witness to these times, reinterpret history, and prophesy the future... This is the art and purview of the documentary” (Rabiger, p. 12). Additionally, Rabiger quotes Michael Renov’s *Theorizing Documentary* in saying that a documentary “has four basic tendencies: to record, reveal or preserve; to persuade or promote; to analyze or interrogate; to express” (p. 318).

The central goal of my documentary is to observe and record the exercise. I want to give voice to this exercise and deliver it to where it could not have gone before. More importantly, I seek, as Rabiger puts it, to "contribute to universal understanding" at least as far as the exercise is concerned.

Documentary theory also explains how the filmmakers and subjects basically interact and how their behavior serves documentary’s purpose. Rabiger summarizes the claims of dozens of current documentary theories into one idea. “Nonfiction films have mostly been made by those with power aiming to instruct and pacify, or those without power aiming to get it. Documentarians have often tried to occupy a middle ground, aiming to mediate by representing those without a voice- a noble but often delusional role” (Rabiger, p. 315). As for the main purpose of documentary as it relates to society, “Much of the discussion revolves around the fissure... distinguished between art as a mirror held up to society and art as a hammer acting on society to change it” (Rabiger, p. 319).

These theories illustrate how I as a filmmaker must approach my occupational mission. By illustrating this exercise in the documentary form, I hope to at least point out to the audience that, on some level, they have been missing some vital part to their acting training. The

documentary mirrors the exercise, but the impression it leaves on the audience acts as a hammer on this part of society to work change (specifically, for actors to use this exercise to improve their acting). Furthermore, I'm not "delusional," as Rabiger puts it, to think I can occupy the middle ground. I do seek to exercise the power of the medium over the audience. By examining my motives I at least become aware of them and the chance of them getting out of check are diminished.

Perhaps the most important concept that documentary theory deals with is representation.

The issue of representation- who can speak for another- looms large. This is natural when the west is moving tortuously toward a form of democracy that includes a multiplicity rather than a hierarchy of voices. Speaking on behalf of others is almost a disease among documentarians... [they] make it their work to represent those without a voice, which in the end is everyone who cannot make films for themselves. This is reminiscent of the charitable activities of the privileged in another age and should alert us to the complex motives underlying all charity, and the dangers of thinking one is primarily serving someone else's interests (Rabiger, p. 319).

Indeed, who is more suited to represent and speak on behalf of a group? What makes one voice better than another? Who has rights to represent a group over another voice? What defines good intentions and claims to truth? These issues not only deal with problems of who should get to speak on behalf of a subject, but also with questions of who is actually getting their say. In a film, who is most expressing themselves? The subjects? The author? The film?

These theories of representation put me on the hot-seat. I feel my qualifications justify my presence as a representative of this subject. I have a special relationship to the subjects which gives me needed perspective, empathy, knowledge, and trust. As a member of the group of "believers" who subscribe to Dr. Vincent's teachings I have a duty to represent this subject. Being a representative of this philosophy I have privileged knowledge and perspective of the

subject. I have prior insight into the subject that a stranger would have to spend a great deal of research uncovering. I also have a personal trust and relationship already established with the subjects. My prior relationship saves time for me as a filmmaker. I did not have to do much research about Dr. Vincent or her exercise, nor did I have to spend much of our valuable time establishing a relationship and fostering her trust for me to accurately and justly represent her. Conversely, I am a worthy representative for opposite reasons. Time has given me a much needed distance and maturity to dilute that relationship somewhat. I won't be so biased to the subject that I jeopardize my representational duties to the film, but my empathy will ensure just representation of the subject.

Documentary theory deals a lot with the ethics and responsibility of the filmmaker to those he is investigating. "If it is true that the unexamined life is not worth living, the documentary is often justified solely for the examination and self-examination it brings one's participants" (Rabiger, p. 310). The lasting ramifications and risks of the documentary events upon the participants is an important consideration. There is the possibility of taking a participant "up to an important, perhaps unperceived, threshold in his life. In a revealing moment, they cross into territory never before penetrated" (Rabiger, 310) must be prepared for, or at least acknowledged. "We may see a 'privileged moment' where all notion of film as an artificial environment ceases for participation and audience alike" (Rabiger, p. 310). Of course this moment could run either way for the participant. It could be a life-changing epiphany or the catalyst to a breakdown. "There is also an ethical responsibility for causing change. The documentary often alters its subjects' lives merely by exposing them to scrutiny- their own and others" or to new experiences. The director and the documentary "has become responsible for the direction of a life" (Rabiger, p. 311).

This theory caused me to deal with some deep personal issues of responsibility and liability that even now keep me reeling. I knew all along that I would be placing the three actors

in a precarious position. They would face the stresses of reuniting with their old mentor, being judged and evaluated on their successes and failures, and re-examining their relationship with her now that they are adults. These combined with the fact that, for some of them, the relationship with her was at best not the most cooperative. Additionally, the scene I had chosen for Ethan and Renee to perform was wrought with complications. It dealt with personal subject matter that was very resonate with them as a couple. They would have to face their own dark fears, personal shortcomings, character flaws, and various cracks in their relationship that were mirrored in that scene. What made things even worse was the fact that the mirror of the scene was transparent to all of the people present. They knew Ethan and Renee well enough to see the rich irony in the scene. They might have as well have authored the scene themselves, straight out of chapters and events of their lives. What was even worse was the timing of it all. They were engaged and scheduled to be married in two months. Therefore these were issues for them that were already hot and well-worn by that time. To have to enact all of that out in front of a group, much less the posterity of the camera, put a heavy weight upon me. In the end, it required a healthy sense of adventure and a leap of faith on all our parts.

The exploration of authorship as it affects form and voice are thoroughly discussed by Rabiger.

Authorship means at a certain point giving up your control to some amorphous but vibrant sense of 'truth'... as the piece begins insistently to make its own demands, and dictate what it want its final form to be. A different truth is emerging about a character or a certain situation, and you have to decide whether to ignore it or to acknowledge it and live with the consequences. Committing yourself to this search for underlying truths really makes you sort of an Everyman committed to a spiritual journey. What you sense is present may always be the devil in disguise, throwing a seductive irrelevancy at you to confound you, or it may be the angel of truth, challenging you to follow its footsteps to unknown destinations (Rabiger, p. 172).

My favorite consideration of authorship deals with the contradictory endeavor of transparency, “the ‘transparent’ documentarian busily finding and illuminating a subject ends up negating his own importance as an author. For this kind of filmmaker often aims to present life on the screen so it exists with scarcely a trace of authorship” (Rabiger, p. 131). Issues of authorship eventually cycle back to concerns about representation. Whose perception is more important? Is the filmmaker's impression more important than the character's?

I knew all along that my preference for transparency would be my focus. But I have a habit, a strong zeal for trying to communicate as much information as possible about the subjects of my documentaries. I had issues and passions about the subject. I had something to say about it and the film would represent that. Unfortunately, I had too much to say and the first few drafts of the film represented my esoteric, intellectual exploration of the subject and neglected the importance of the action. Specifically, my error was when I initially attempted to make a film portraying the whole histories of Method Acting and Gestalt psychology, the controversies surrounding them, and other issues that diverged from the central focus of Dr. Vincent's exercise. The film's point of view was from my hidden perspective. I had inadvertently infused strong elements of reflexivity into the documentary by creating these historical, political, and editorial essays. This began to occlude the transparency of the film's point of view. If left in the original form, the audience would clearly see that the characters were discussing issues that were important to the filmmaker. The exercise and the characters as the focus of the film were becoming diluted as the film focused on these abstract issues of questionable relevance. Their sympathetic point of view would have been lost and the audience would be left with no one with whom to connect or believe. It's ironic. Rabiger stated that the filmmaker who attempts too much transparency makes a film with no author. My effort to focus on the issues put me square in the middle of the film. Rosenthal states my problem perfectly, “The trouble is that even with the most rational head in the world, you sometimes try to do too much in one film. In the end,

your ambition may let you down, whereas a more modest film would have worked well” (p. 43).

The issue of authorship has the unique effect of removing a lot of the filmmaker’s ability to control the films and their specific content. Documentaries “owe their credibility to acts, words, and images quite literally from life and lacking central authorship. In almost every other area of expression, the creative artist has control over the form in which content is expressed, but in Documentary, the filmmaker is in the position of a mosaic artist” (Rabiger, p. 297). Because the director cannot control the events, he cannot control the materials he builds the film from and must release some responsibility of the film’s evolution to the elements.

I knew that this subject was Dr. Vincent's area of expertise. This exercise was the culmination of her life's work and the representation of her belief system. I knew that there would be many areas that I would not be able to direct her into. I would have to allow her the opportunity to reveal herself to me. Also, once the workshop began, I took a backseat as she became director and host. She was responsible for driving the momentum and my influence would only serve to hamper the process. I had to have faith in my casting and let go of the wheel. My role was to concentrate on acquiring the best possible footage of what she was giving me.

Rationales

Rabiger's referral to documentary theory dealing with the distinction, "between art as a mirror held up to society and art as a hammer acting on society to change it" (Rabiger, p. 319) forms the basis for most of my rationales between theory and my production. A statement of my reasons or principles would, like most of the arguments forming the basis of documentary theory, have to revolve around this thesis of art’s dichotomy both as the mirror/hammer

metaphors as it relates to society. Such a rationale would serve as the fundamental reasons serving to account for how my film will be assembled.

...but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show her virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure (Hamlet Act II Scene II).

I do concur that the purpose of art, and especially Documentary as an art form, is to examine nature.

I feel that art is most successful when its standards and conventions for communication are built from models of nature. Nature serves as the model for art in form, function, and mode. Therefore, the means of communication should not exceed the audience's natural capacities for understanding, reason, and stamina (though they should, to certain understandable degrees, be tested, challenged, and taxed).

The artistic endeavor acts as a vessel to hold a piece of nature reflected. It serves to question, reveal and confirm reality. Its flaws and attributes, clearly highlighted, speak for themselves (both for the piece of nature reflected and the art displaying it). No further claims of truth need be constructed into the vessel to improve upon its reflection. This reasoning is supported by Rabiger and Rosenthal's claims that Documentary's basic yet ultimate calling is to record, to bear witness. This is achieved through a more passive voice by the author. The less the author speaks, the more an audience listens.

Conversely, many documentary filmmakers advocate what essentially boils down to a preference for reflexivity over transparency. They hope to actively lead their audiences to relate what they see to the outside socioeconomic conditions so that the audience can then apply their

new perceptions by working for change in their own world. I feel that too much involvement can skew the subjects away from their more natural behaviors. A discretionary distance between the filmmakers and their subjects must be obtained to preserve some form of objectivity and to maintain some safety and control. Like Shakespeare believed “your own discretion should be your tutor.” Your own conscious and experience should lead you into how close to get and how much of your own voice should go into the piece

I prefer the mirror approach to represent any subject because it will not actively seek to recontextualize the subject. The authorship roles of the material are also respected by the as the subject is not made to conform to a preordained design.

Finally, I feel that the audience can be persuaded by the mirror role more so than the hammer role of art. Change can be achieved by merely mirroring nature. Ultimately this approach fulfills both roles of art’s mirror/hammer duality. The hammer role of art is actually cultivated within the audience by their exposure to the mirror role of art. They bear witness to nature’s/reality’s needs and respond if the artistic piece is truly reflective enough.

Approaches

Not only do Rabiger and Rosenthal present analysis of the most thoroughly examined theories, they also provide the most practical methodologies for the construction of films. I have used their guidelines in developing the cinematic language of my documentary. They both concur that approach toward the film's structure is self-evident. Rabiger mentions dozens of times his contention that content dictates form. Rosenthal points out that since the audience influences approach, the director should pay special attention to the context in which it will be shown to the audience and know their attitudes toward the subject (Rosenthal, p. 18). The intended audience is the greatest influence upon the form the film will take.

The intended audience for this film will be well versed in the subject matter and will not need extensive exposition and explanation about the subjects of acting and theatre concepts. They will be intelligent and educated and well-versed in documentary and mass media communication conventions and standards. This sophisticated audience will be mature enough to sit through a more conservative treatment of the subject in order to have more revealed to them about it. Therefore, the film's conservative and adult approach reflects the importance of the subject and audience.

Most films focus the approach through “strong and charismatic characters involved with the story” and feature “character and situational change, either immediate or over time” (Rosenthal, p. 19). By choosing such a 'hero,' the audience has a subject with which to sympathize. The reactions and attitude of the hero go a long way to communicate to the audience how to interpret the events of the film. All characteristics of the film are thus put into a context for the audience by how they relate to the hero. This character is sometimes known as a “key or handle: an angle from which to tell the story in the most interesting, riveting, and entertaining fashion. These characters provide warmth, empathy, and identification” (Rosenthal, p. 46). As for my film, Dr. Vincent is obviously the main character, but she has to compete with the events of the exercise and the actors who are also sympathetic and interesting.

Approach is also shaped by the film's structure. It can be either an essay to construct a persuasive or informative argument, or the structure can be narrative, following the events of a story. The narrative structure features processes of change and combines classical elements of conflict, action, climax and resolution. When lacking narrative elements of great change for characters, a film's approach must follow more of an essay mode. Both the narrative and essay approach can be either natural or constructed as it relates to the subject (Rosenthal, p. 45). A constructed approach uses an invented device from which to convey the story. A natural approach uses elements within the film.

This film will combine both the essay and narrative structures. The film will represent the workshop from a natural approach. The narrative of the workshop's overall sequence of events will be preserved to represent the true form of the exercise and portray the dynamic effects of it upon the subjects. Additionally, a constructed essay will be assembled to backdrop the workshop and be used as exposition, elaboration, introduction, and illustration of the exercises characteristics and issues.

Since structure can be either natural or invented yet still be “dictated by the material,” this essence, the spine of the film, “should present an interesting, well-shaped story” (Rosenthal, p.48). Or, in the case of my documentary, the spine produces an analysis, an illustration, a portrait of the subject “with pacing and rhythm that leads to a satisfying resolution” (Rosenthal, p. 48). The subject of the workshop demands that the documentary parallel the structure according to the exercise's steps and stages but be framed by exposition and conclusion. The workshop itself provides elements of suspense, action, rhythm, conflict, and climax that provides the elements needed for a successful narrative.

When shaping the film, the filmmaker's choices are realistically limited. Content is the major force that dictates form. “Freedom of expression is severely curtailed by the idiosyncratic nature of the given materials [and subject] even circumscribed by them... the documentation is to a great degree in the hands of the material, and the chosen narrative strategies must be those that elicit the most significance from available materials” (Rabiger, p. 296). The rationale behind Rabiger's argument is why I have decided to respect the form of the workshop and recreate it in the film as the essay makes its arguments around the central position of the workshop.

When dealing with the actual sections of the film, it is important to remember that they each have important objectives to fulfill. “The opening of the film has to do two things very fast. First it has to catch or “hook” the viewer's interest, and second, it has to define very quickly what the film is about and where it is going. The opening “hook” should play into the audience's

curiosity. You present an intriguing situation and say, “Watch me! You’ll be fascinated to see where we’re going to take you” (Rosenthal, p. 82).

My approach to the opening sequence is to assemble the most provocative and exciting moments of the workshop and rapidly bombard the audience with them. This will be accompanied by the shortest, cryptic, yet intriguing statements that the subjects have to say about the exercise. The shots of people yelling odd things and statements out of context will stimulate and pique the curiosity of the audience.

Beyond the initial beginning, the film deals with varying levels of rhythm, pace, and climax. “A good beginning takes you into the film with a bang, with a sense of expectation. The problem is how to sustain that interest throughout the rest of the film” (Rosenthal, p. 91). If a solid structure for the film has been provided, a lot of the problem is solved. Revelation of information appears to be the key. As long as the audience is kept sated with a steady supply of information, they will participate and observe. Content again dictates form and in this case, the order of disclosure. In my documentary the characters will continue to introduce the issues and deliver opinions and impressions about their experiences within the exercise. Their strong and unique insights will keep the audience interested by each new revelation.

Rosenthal describes rhythm and pace as “logical and emotional flow... its level of intensity should vary, and it should build to a compelling climax.” The most common problems arise in “sequences that go on too long, when there is no connection between sequences, when too many similar sequences follow each other, when too many action sequences appear and not enough reflective ones, and when there is no sense of development or logical or emotional order to the sequences.”

The documentary will obviously try to avoid sequences that suffer like those listed. Though the rhythm of each piece of information will take as long as it needs to be revealed it must be tightly observed so as to not adversely affect the film's rhythm. Afterwards, the film will

avoid dawdling so it can proceed to the next point of the story or argument so that the audience doesn't get restless.

The editorial process that the essay or narrative goes through is aimed at finding the core story or argument. Various pieces of information must be judged for their value, especially as they relate in the context of the film. The footage for this documentary has been repeatedly re-examined and various concepts of the subject and material continues to be discarded. Topics that are no longer needed or relevant are left behind as the production progresses. It soon becomes apparent that every detail of a process or every fact about a character isn't necessary. Information that remains in the film is based upon an hierarchical relationship. The most important information has the most permanent relationship with the film.

The editing structure handles time in very specific ways for "deciding in what order cause and effect will be shown and what dramatic advantages there may be in altering the natural or actual sequence of events" (Rabiger, p. 207). By varying chronological sequences and repeating parallel events among the characters, the structure is arranged in order to sound upon a thematic emphasis. For example, all of the shots of Julie and Ethan saying a particular emotive phrase were assembled and edited together because they fit the same thematic concept. These shots were taken out of chronological order and placed where they relate to various aspects of the essay.

Structure is also constructed to fulfill the film's broader objectives. The filmmaker needs to consider the following points:

- How and at what point information important to story development will appear.
- What you intend as the climactic sequence and where this should go.
- How this relates to other sequences in terms of the action rising toward the film's projected 'crisis' or emotional apex and the falling action after it (Rabiger, p. 43).

For example, the most dramatic footage of the workshop was saved for the climax of the film.

Additional aspects that affect the form, rhythm, and pacing include narration and music. Narration is considered by how it relates to visual material. "Should the words dictate the picture or vice versa? Pictorial rhythm and flow should be the first consideration, and words should be written to a picture, rather than pictures adjusted to words"(Rosenthal, p. 171). Music should also be dealt with in the same minimalist manner. "The usual complaint is that there is too much. The music often drowns the film or leads the emotions so that there are no surprises. It can break the illusion of reality" (Rosenthal, p. 174). "Music must be used very discriminatingly since it is so often misused as a cheap dramatic crutch. Too often filmmakers reach for music as a reliable means of stirring emotion that should, but doesn't arise out of content. It's better to use no music than bad music; good sound effects, atmosphere [and dialogue] can in any case be a kind of musical composition that has great impact" (Rabiger, p. 244). Based upon these theories of using music, a score has not been added to my documentary.

The drawbacks of narration begin with the alienation it brings to the film. "A narrating voice is inevitably a mediating presence between audience and participants" (Rabiger, p. 235). The audience's "relationship with such a film is essentially passive, for its contract dictates that we either accept authority or tune it out altogether. Such films are not interested in engaging the viewer in a dialogue... This is anathema to the intelligent documentary, which aims to involve the viewer's values and discrimination, not just to invade memory or colonize the subconscious" (Rabiger, p. 235). My choices concerning narration parallel how my choices about using music unfolded. Narration was abandoned because of the unnatural context that it would place the events and testimony in. This film was intended to be represented by those who experienced it, not by a stranger.

One of the largest issues of approach is the film's point of view. There are many approaches to selecting an appropriate point of view. It is "the vantage point from which a film's

'story' is told. Most films resort to varying points of view as the need arises. Frequently the uniqueness and force of one viewpoint is best revealed by juxtaposing a countervailing one" (Rabiger, p. 275). I have chosen to seek an omniscient viewpoint for this film because it automatically conveys a certain sense of objectivity to the audience. "The focus of this type of viewpoint moves freely around in time and space to suggest a multifaceted consciousness. It will express a collective rather than a more limited personal vision. The omniscient point of view often signifies an author's modest wish not to stand between the viewer and the subject" (Rabiger, p. 279). The viewpoint of this documentary will also, to a certain extent, represent multiple characters within the film. "This viewpoint is interested in establishing the mechanisms of cause and effect experienced within a group or class of society" (Rabiger, p. 282). My intention was to allow the characters to speak for themselves. The collected and varied continuum of their opinions and means of expression are vastly richer than anything I could artificially create.

This documentary contains many elements of a process film which "deals with the chain of events that add up to a significant process. Often it will show more than one strand of ongoing present, each serving as cutaway from the others. Cutting among several parallel stories in this way allows each segment to be reduced to its essence. This technique further allows useful comparisons to be drawn between concurrent events" (Rabiger, p. 289). The film's structure also contains many elements that focus on the main event. For the event-centered film, "the event is the backbone of the film. The event has its stages, and plugged into its forward movement may be sections of interview, pieces of relevant past, or even pieces of its future" (Rabiger, p. 288).

The film also structures itself around the actors' journey. The journey film follows its subjects through the beginning, middle, and end of some sort of trek through space or time or event (Rabiger, p. 291).

Other issues of approach deal with other, different decisions of point of view that filmmakers must choose. It boils down to two categories: observation and intercession. Here there is a “philosophical division of documentary into two branches: intercessional and non-intercessional, [that is, otherwise stated] cinema verite and direct (or observational) cinema” (Rabiger, p. 323). Direct cinema, as an observational emphasis, tries to focus more on characteristics of transparency. The illusion is attempted that the camera and filmmaker are not involved in or influencing in the events. Cinema verite as an intercessional style, deals with issues of reflexivity. The camera and filmmaker are witnessed often as participants in the events. These films often incorporate personal aspects where “the point of view is unashamedly and subjectively that of the director” (Rabiger, p. 331). He has introduced himself as a character in the film along with the other participants.

This film's approach has chosen to present a more distanced transparency. This filmmaker did not want to involve himself too deeply. I would have loved to make a film about my experiences as I went through the process of the exercise. But because the events were so emotional I chose to distance myself from the events as much as I could. There was a distinct safety and objectivity that rested in my observational relationship to the film.

Review of Additional Texts Reviewed for Research

Documentary Films

The research for this thesis has explored the efforts of documentaries covering similar workshop themes. These films have faced many production problems unique to their subjects and approaches, but universally, these are the same production concerns that this proposed film will be faced with, and analysis of their techniques reveals both the fruitful and the ineffectual

methodologies. These films serve to model an ideal form for the proposed documentary to follow and as a base from which to diverge.

The film texts reviewed include Joel Asher's *Getting The Part*, Rives Collins's *Introduction to Creative Drama and Improvisation*, Susan Leigh's *Advanced Voice Workout for the Actor*, John Luck's *Movement for Period Plays*, Noelle C. Nelson's *Cold Readings Made Easy: A Survival Kit for the Working Actor*, and J. Allen Suddeth's *Unarmed Stage Combat*. These examples represent their own archetype in that they share so many characteristics. They parallel very similar structure, style, and approaches. The criticism of one individual documentary is the flaw of them all. The group represents a type that could reasonably be considered to be a genre.

These films meet with typical approaches and the more than common demands of filming a geographically static group with multiple cameras and lighting sources. They are quite efficient at standard practices of which little or no improvement can be made upon. These "studio" shoots demand lighting and camera blocking strategies that filmmakers ignore at the film's peril. Many of these films' approaches in this studio setting mirror what this proposed film must attempt.

I have decided to focus on the areas in which these selected programs fail to achieve their goals so that my production can focus on avoiding these areas and secure success. The biggest area of concern is a failure to create or portray a large enough world in which the events of the film take place. The universe of these films is often claustrophobic, limited, almost one sided in nature. They feature an instructor and several actors to demonstrate the acting system. The host-instructor is always an expert in the field and the actors who display the workshop are sometimes well-known celebrities. But that is often the limit of the sources that the film will use to deliver its message and cover the action. All of the material originates from the studio. The films suffer from the limitation of being almost a taped lecture. The production values bear a

closer resemblance to a live event than a controlled, prepared, planned creation. The unnecessary focus on the static location of the studio ignores interviews and outside footage that could greatly illustrate and expand the action and argument.

A few of the selected films, such as *Unarmed Stage Combat* and *Getting the Part*, differed in that they did include additional interviews and outside footage to introduce and develop the issues or characters. These outside sources expand the film's voice, substantiate the authority of the film's claims, and provide corroborating evidence and testimony of the studio events. Audiences will not only more receptively consider arguments from multiple sources, but they will pay more attention to the delivery of them. Films exploiting multiple testimonies obviously have a greater chance of reaching more demographically specific groups because these groups will sympathize, listen, and agree with a member of their strata. Audiences hear a chorus better than a lone speaker. The films analyzed in this research rely heavily on the expert testament of the host expert and exploit the charm and appeal of the celebrity subjects that demonstrate the product. But ultimately, the lack of legitimate and sympathetic supporting sources leaves the events and claims of the bottled studio shoots with a hollow ring. Most of these theatre and acting films suffer from such flaws.

Another failure of the theatre and acting films are the neglect that the workshop's actors receive as characters of the films. A noticeable level of context is missing from the perspective of these characters. The actors featured in the workshop are merely vehicles for the demonstrations. The films never address who they are, what they need, and how they will benefit from the experience. They are merely Avatars from which the methods and arguments of the films or acting philosophy are channeled. Disregard for these characters relegates them down to the level of talking props. They are not characters to identify with who have needs to fulfill by the advertised system. They have no sympathetic positions to either support or discard. Their potential to participate in the film is diminished.

These texts depict the unique technical and aesthetic challenges of filming an interactive group workshop. They mirror many of the same logistic, technical, and aesthetic challenges that my documentary will faced. Since my film faced similar environments and hazards, the production can benefit from analysis of the techniques that these films use. The purpose of such examination is to ultimately direct the production towards productive avenues. The results of this investigation will help focus efforts on attempting to honor the systems that lead to the successes that these selected pieces enjoyed. But the most important product of this research is to aid in learning from the mistakes these films made.

Literature

As to what Dr. Vincent was actually doing and how it specifically developed, I could find no legitimate sources. Gestalt is a frustratingly elusive term. Since it has migrated through numerous fields, the definition and operation has become fractured, splintered. Like what Gestalt has become to theatre (totally unrelated in concept or application to its original form), it has performed equal transformations into other fields. Data along publication lines has been equally elusive because what Dr. Vincent is doing is unique. During my research I had to filter out much information that at first appeared promising because certain criteria had to be met for information to be useful, relevant, and viable as a source. Few of the publications I researched reported on topics that resembled or were appropriately related to this subject. Those few hits I did have were dismissed because their connections were not specific enough. They either did not fit into the Gestalt subject category, they dealt with techniques used for psychological outlets and not actor training, or were psychological tools in theatre used for analysis and not production. It would be a stretch to make them fit into a discussion of my topic. If there was a

stronger connection it was generations removed and the relationship was not worthy of exploring.

Ultimately, I wanted to make a connection between The Living Theatre and Dr. Vincent. In *Gestalt Therapy, Psychology, and The Living Theatre* I was able to discover the basic roots of how the Perls developed some procedures for Gestalt psychology and how Goodman may have inadvertently migrated exercises for Gestalt psychotherapy into theatre by performing sessions upon Malina and other members of The Living Theatre. From there the trail becomes faint. One of Dr. Vincent's professors was a member of The Living Theatre. Dr. Vincent states that she learned the technique from observing the teacher's methods. Through a series a small but reasonable inductive leaps of logic, the connection appears to be direct: Dr. Vincent's instructor at SMU brought the gestalt work to SMU from New York where she learned the exercise from rehearsals or classes at The Living Theatre or from sessions with Goodman. I suspect that the only way to confirm the migration and evolution of this exercise would be to track down that professor from SMU and interview her. It's probable that other members of The Living Theatre took the exercise with them to their next theatre job and began applying it like Dr. Vincent's SMU professor. I assumed this would be the case, but the more I researched the more I found that no one had heard of an exercise like this. If other members of The Living Theatre have tried to exhalt the virtues of this exercise, they have been very unsuccessful.

This lack of information is actually quite indicative of two larger issues. First, whatever relationship Dr. Vincent's methods had with Gestalt psychology, it has long since been discarded, if it ever existed. The name 'Gestalt' as she uses it to label what she does is the only remaining artifact of its mystical origins. All other characteristics have evolved to fit more modern contexts and that is why correlations and causational relationships cannot be drawn between her procedures and Gestalt psychology both in modern reality and in historical

research. Second, since the results of my research of psychology in theatre turned out to be fringe groups that did not fit into my subject's category, and that it must also be concluded that Dr. Vincent's techniques fits into such a fringe phenomenon, it is more than fitting that the intent of this documentary is to promote awareness of her and her technique. There is clearly a need and an audience to be exploited in order to bring certain amounts of psychology in theatre production out from these fringe groups and into the mainstream

Other

Websites were also silent regarding what Dr. Vincent was doing. The few Gestalt websites I found dealt mostly with self-improvement seminars. The information provided was generated by resorts, institutions, individuals advertising their conventions, printed materials, and classes. My favorite website was maintained by The Church of Scientology (www.ccr.org/art/eng/page10.htm). The website was part of their propaganda campaign to smear both psychology and Method Acting. In it they blamed both groups for the deaths and downfall of dozens of actors and musicians and the degeneration of society at large. It was not a very informative site, but it was one of the few sources that covered both psychology and acting. At the very least it was very revealing about the general negative impressions a prospective audience might have towards these subjects and what extremes must be taken by a filmmaker intent on communicating with them.

CHAPTER 5

PRODUCTION

Overview

The production phase was filled with many surprises. The first interview was acquired on a tape that was found to be defective. Renee's interview was lost. Additionally, Ethan's interview was full of difficulties. He had not slept the night before in an attempt to make it on time from College Station to the interview in Fort Worth. When he arrived at eight he was alert and excited. By noon he was grumpy and belligerent. He did not make for a cooperative interview subject. These factors led me to reshoot all of the interviews. The second round produced better results. Also, on the morning of Wednesday, March 31, the day that Dr. Vincent was to arrive in Fort Worth from North Carolina, she called me at home. This was two days before the workshop. She informed me that she had been battling the flu for five days. In addition to still having the flu, she had an allergic reaction to the prescribed antibiotics. She was covered with a rash that left her swollen and blotchy. I agreed to let her postpone the workshop for two weeks. I called all of the participants and rescheduled.

Schedule

The schedule for production was as follows:

March 13	Shoot interviews with Renee, Julie, and Ethan
March 22	Reshoot Renee's interview
March 23	Reshoot Julie's interview
March 27	Reshoot Ethan's interview
April 2	Shoot Dr. Vincent's interview
April 3	Shoot workshop

Crew

The production crew consisted of Lori Massey and myself on cameras. I did not want to afford the time and expense of hiring additional crew. This crew and I are well-versed with each other's capabilities and have extensive communications skills. We work well together. Over the years we have devised a system for two camera shoots where we delegate responsibilities of coverage to each camera. It's based on a simple line-of-sight principle: whichever camera the characters line up to and face, that camera gets the shot of both subjects. The other camera gets the close up of the character leading the action. If the characters are separated, each camera will shoot the character facing them. This usually places the characters and cameras in opposing positions: the stage left character will be shot by the house left camera, and visa versa. These shots last until the characters move into a new position where they line up again and the cameras then recompose according to the first rule. This system makes shooting and editing easier. Each camera has their assignments and rules to follow. So each time a character makes a move, the operator knows how to adjust. This system ensures equal,

consistent coverage. Later, the editor will know how the cameras and their shots will react based upon character movements. The editor can time cuts according to the best shot that will appear.

During the interviews, Lori operated the camera while I conducted the interview. The subjects needed a focus upon which to interact during the questioning. This person on which to focus could not be running the camera and direct the questions, nor could the director run the camera and keep the conversation flowing. This worked well for the first interview sessions. During the second round I conducted the interviews during Lori's work time and she could not attend. I had to leave the camera unmanned and static while I interacted with the subjects. The composition of these shots is less disciplined since there was no operator to adjust composition to follow the characters about their movements.

Equipment

The equipment used included the two digital cameras (Sony models DCR-TRV900 and DSP-PD100); a three point lighting kit using two Bessler Photoflood Pro 10 lights and a Bessler Photoflood Pro 8 light, each with 200 watt lamps and stands; a Sennheiser 60 shotgun mic; two Sony WCS-990 900MHz wireless microphone systems; and an Azden WR22-PRO 2 channel (171.105 and 171.845 MHz) wireless microphone system. Production utilized eight AA, eight AAA, and nineteen 9V batteries. Both production and post-production consumed 28 Sony DV cassettes, ten VHS cassettes, and twenty SVHS cassettes.

Releases

All subjects signed release forms which can be found in Appendix C. These release forms are signed permission from the subjects allowing me to use the material publicly (Rabiger, p. 187). “No signature is valid without the \$1 minimum legal [but symbolic] payment. The release is a form of consent that gives [the filmmaker] copyright over the image and words of the participant... and to prevent [them] from going back on a purely verbal agreement or deciding at the eleventh hour that they do not want to appear in your film” (Rabiger, p. 141). Some sources say that the \$1 payment makes the agreement legal, sort of a contract. Others (Rosenthal, p. 128) say that nothing about the document is legally binding. In reality all depends upon how forceful and convincing your lawyer is. What really matters is that the subjects have the impression that the contract is binding. This notion dissuades them from taking action against you, the film, the production company, the distributors, and the broadcasters. Some say that it is unethical to fool your subjects in this manner. I feel that for safety’s sake, the ruse is justifiable. Of course nothing can protect the filmmaker if they have used footage so outrageously out of context that it causes harm to the subjects. If the filmmaker has lied about subjects or situations through the use of the footage, then issues of libel and slander are ones that the release form cannot protect the filmmaker from. The release form only gives the filmmaker property rights to the footage.

Budget

The Department of Fine and Performing Arts at Texas Wesleyan University was the sponsor for the Gestalt Acting Workshop. I provided funds for the rest of the production. The itemized record of how we divided up the expenses can be found in Appendix B.

CHAPTER 6

POST PRODUCTION

Schedule

The schedule for postproduction is as follows:

August 2	Finish logging footage
August 30	Finish transcribing footage
September 21	Finish paper cut
September 28	Finish first cut
October 11	Finish second cut
October 25	Finish third and final cut

Equipment

The equipment used for postproduction included a Hewlett Packard 7285 PC and a Panasonic 1980 SVHS VCR. Both were used for off-line logging and transcription of footage. The Silicon Graphics SGI 320 workstation, Adobe Premiere 5.1a video editing software, along with a Medea 67 Gig RAID Array was used for on-line non-linear editing. I chose digital non-linear computer editing over non-linear VCR-to-VCR editing for the

preservation it would provide for the video resolution. From the acquisition footage throughout the multiple generations of edits on through to the final cut, the integrity of the video resolution was preserved by the system. I also preferred non-linear editing for the freedom of revision it would allow in the editing process. I could make changes anywhere along the timeline of the video while it was still a program in the computer. This allowed me to make changes in the documentary without altering other sections of the video. With the digital non-linear system I could also format the documentary video with file compression, shrink the frame size, and reduce the frame rate. This created a smaller file size so I could burn the documentary onto a CD-ROM for archiving and distribution on the University of North Texas' net server.

Reconceptualization during Postproduction

The reconceptualization of the film during post production saw many changes in the project. Apart from what was predicted in the proposal, the workshop did not become the central focus of the film. Since many aspects of the workshop turned out to be longer or more awkward than anticipated, the interviews were arranged in such a way as to make an essay which then became the spine of the film. The workshop footage was then placed throughout the essay as illustration. A large section of the workshop was featured right before the essay's conclusion. This section focused solely on the procedure of the exercise. During the initial editing I reduced the number of clips chosen from twenty hours to approximately four hours and then to two hours of footage. This reduction represents the discarding of all footage that did not fit the chosen subjects and issues of the film. The later filtering of footage was based upon the characters' efficiency and expressiveness. This means that all shots were dropped because they were flawed by mis-statements or statements that took too long to develop into their point. Often one shot would be chosen over another similarly equal shot because it was more succinct

or expressive. Later about an hour's worth of subject matter was dropped as tedious repetition of issues and points were removed. As the film began to focus solely on the most important, core issues, eight sections of the film were cut that: 1) dealt with the level of disclosure and information the actor should have going into the exercise, 2) explored the controversy surrounding method acting, 3) analyzed the exercise's nickname "crying lessons" and how the technique is actually much more, 4) advocated a balanced approach to acting (using both system and method tools), 5) dealt with the correct attitude an actor should have to successfully participate in the exercise, 6) dealt with the correct attitude, training, and experience an instructor should have to successfully conduct the exercise, 7) explored how theatre in academia was the indigenous environment of the exercise and the only appropriate place to use it, and 8) anecdotes from the students and Dr. Vincent thoroughly describing when they first participated in the exercise and speculation about how successfully this session would go in the upcoming workshop. These topics were of vital importance to the subject but the project simply did not have time to accommodate them and successfully illustrate the main goal of the documentary which was the process of the exercise. The final outline for the film was compiled as follows:

1. Teaser: A short compilation of dramatic shots from the workshop.
2. General description of Gestalt exercise provided by the characters.
3. Character introductions: Dr. Vincent, Renee, Julie, Ethan
4. More thorough description of Gestalt exercise provided by the characters.
5. Stage 1 of the exercise "Alone Onstage"
 - a. How memory lies in the body
6. Masks of society that an actor wears
7. Audience as a support group
8. Stage 2 of the exercise "Exploring the emotional landscape"
 - a. Pulling in, "I need."

- b. Pushing away, “Go Away!”
 - c. Universal emotive words and phrases, why they work
 - d. Who’s the boss?
9. Stage 3 of the exercise “Employing the work into monologue”
- a. “Acting vs. Performing”
10. Conclusions: How the process benefits an actor

CHAPTER 7

EVALUATION OF COMPLETED WORK

“Good films are one of a kind and therefore not useful, in a narrow sense, as models. Any documentary film is successful because someone has solved a particular problem: how to accommodate that unique footage into that particular narrative form.” (Rabiger, p. 296). I feel that the opposite can be equally true: Films can be successful because a narrative or essay form has been constructed and edited to make accommodations in order to conform to the needs of the acquired footage. The form has fit the footage. As Rabiger repeatedly stated, “Content dictates form” (p.156).

There were some decisions that literally saved the production. In the proposal, plans were made for the documentary to convey the history and development of the exercise. In order to effectively do this, a review was planned of the development of method acting, including a portrait of its key developer Konstantine Stanislavsky and a short history of the Gestalt brand of psychology that would put the exercise in its appropriate context. This proved to be quite an extensive and time consuming subject and eventually it appeared that including this huge amount of exposition in the film would bring the documentary out of focus. These historical aspects were also dropped due to lack of evidence discovered in the pre-production stage connecting Gestalt and actor training. Though I did find plenty of evidence generally linking theatre and many different types of psychology for numerous applications, I did not find reliable evidence

supporting the very specific relationship between Gestalt and actor training. Those sources I did find that related Gestalt and actor training were from marginalized groups far removed from the mainstream research sources that I used. These organizations did not use systematized procedures for nor did they record or publish their results and findings in reasonably accessible print sources. Like Dr. Vincent's acting professor from SMU, these practitioners could be considered preliminary "pioneers" in this field relating Gestalt and actor training. They might be considered primary historical research sources and after further investigation might turn out to be uniquely qualified to speak intelligently on the subject. But, seeking them out along great distances and expense to interview them and discover their worth as sources is well outside of the scope and purview of this project. Therefore, in light of all of these circumstances, all of these emphases about the origins of Gestalt and its relationship with actor training were dropped because they were ultimately extrinsic from the exercise and the film's focus. The original point of selling the exercise to the film's audience would have been critically weakened. I feel that this was the most important reconceptualization of the entire project.

I feel some of the original intents that were later re-evaluated are still viable. I originally wanted to approach the subject from an objective viewpoint. Even though I have strong feelings regarding the subject, I initially wanted to present a balanced perspective. I wanted to resolve my own long unanswered questions about Dr. Vincent and her procedure. My attempt at pure objectivity was a bit extreme in the beginning, especially considering that I was about to undermine Dr. Vincent with the Gestalt psychotherapist interview. But another attempt at this subject would include opposing views.

There are numerous re-evaluations that were made out of economic or temporal necessity that I would like to explore. I'm not entirely opposed to narration. During this production the characters did an adequate job of expressing themselves, describing the subjects, and exploring the issues. Perhaps in another incarnation of this project narration would

be an initial objective of the film to provide the necessary framework around which the action and argument of the film would be supported. Therefore, the narration would be finitely scripted out of the film's objectives stated in the proposal and would be the first footage acquired.

This film has a rather conservative style. I decided to focus on simple, basic techniques of acquiring footage. In another attempt I would experiment with form and style.

Preproduction

My evaluation of the completed work's various stages begins with the pre-production phase. Ultimately, the largest thing missing about my research during pre-production was a greater grasp of the subject in general. Dr. Vincent informed me during her interview that she had used the exercise by herself in both professional and academic theatre. She also said that she had performed the procedure on fellow actors at their request after they had observed her in the exercise. The main problem with my impression of the exercise was my assumption that it could be used in a rehearsal environment on more than one subject at a time. That led me to design the second part of the workshop to operate around a scene instead of a monologue. My intention was to have Renee and Ethan's scene improved by a sort of 'gestalt direction' provided by Dr. Vincent's intervention with her process. The resulting awkwardness of the second part of the workshop indicates that I should have spent more time with Dr. Vincent exploring exactly what her procedures were. It was nice of her to accommodate my request to perform the workshop in that manner. But it was not the way the exercise works and ultimately did not benefit the documentary. These events illustrate a possible ethical and theoretical contradiction that I created by my efforts to direct the events of the documentary. Is my interference with the subjects tantamount to an undermining of Rabiger's theory of the purpose of documentary to

just observe? The results obviously speak for themselves. I tried to present a truth that wasn't there and I failed because of the interference.

My inquiries during the interviews garnered responses from the subjects ranging from indignation to disgust at the possibility that this technique could be used outside of anything but academic theatre. I had designed the interview questions to explore the possibilities of the technique in public school, professional, and community theatre. In the documentary I planned to explain and explore how the process could be implemented in various modes and genres of theatre. But the subjects' resistance to these concepts took me by surprise.

Another thing that surprised me was the subjects' inability to accurately remember details about their previous experiences and the lack of sophistication and expression in their answers. I expected them to be more passionate about this subject. For years they had been extremely animated when discussing Dr. Vincent or her methods. I knew from first hand experience what their opinions about the exercise were. That is why I chose this controversial topic and cast them as characters in this project. But during the interviews they backed off from stronger opinions that I had earlier heard them eloquently state. I know that I'm judging their performances from my own personal subjective criteria. Perhaps my opinions of them were based on events that occurred too far in the past and had their recall of those events faded or even reversed upon more mature reflection and consideration. I suspect that the solution that might have prevented this surprise would be to have some pre-interview meetings with the interview subjects to discuss and review the questions and issues that would be explored. That way we could come to some sort of consensus regarding what actually happened in the past. They would also be better prepared for the tougher questions with more efficient, succinct responses that express their opinions and attitudes.

The characters' unexpected responses and their failure of words indicates a problem of the preproduction. Both of these problems indicate that I needed better preparation with the

interview subjects. I should have discussed the project and its objectives more in depth with the characters. I also should have explained more thoroughly my expectations of them. Basically, they needed to be trained in order to be able to perform at the level necessary to meet the requirements of the project. My role as director does allow me powers of authorship that extend into a role of authority. Because all of the elements of the film are ultimately the responsibility of the director, that creative and managerial position extends into responsibilities concerning the performances of the characters. I have the right, the responsibility to direct them. Because I did not, the project suffered.

Of course, the audience of the documentary will not know my opinions about the characters' performance. Upon reflection, there were plenty of segments that were useable. These clips make the characters appear informed and expressive. How they are represented in the film is not out of context of reality. I know them to be well-versed and opinioned about the issues and ultimately, that is how they are represented. It just took longer to get it out of them in the interview process than I intended and it surprised me. If I did represent them as something they weren't, I feel my actions would be justified. The ends would support the means because it fits the objectives of the film to preserve the integrity of the subjects as experts of the issues.

My initial proposal included following the actors to the Fort Worth Shakespeare In the Park (FWSP) auditions which coincided with the first round of scheduled time of the workshop. After the workshop at the Law Sone Recital Hall at Texas Wesleyan University they would cross the street to the Science Lecture Theatre where the auditions were being held and I would film them during their auditions. The footage would be used to illustrate their character introductions and various issues surrounding theatre, method acting, and this exercise. Renee arranged a meeting between myself and the Artistic Director of FWSP, Bob Fass. I suspect that there was absolutely no way to successfully approach Mr. Fass. He flatly turned me down without hearing much of my proposal. I suspect that he had already made up his mind.

Nevertheless, I feel that I could have been more prepared for that pitch session. Armed with more options that could have made him more comfortable with my presence, I know that we could have come to a consensus about how to proceed in a manner that would protect both of our interests.

Production

I'm actually rather proud of how the logistics of the workshop were executed. The workshop was designed to provide editorial breaks, both for the film and for the exercise. Breaks were organized in between each actor's session, in between the three parts of each session, and in between the various subject headings of Dr. Vincent's lecture to the workshop audience. These breaks allowed for character changes and rests, permitted cassette tape replacement and small production meetings. The breaks also coincided with how the material was divided in the editing of the film. The structure lent itself to accommodate the subject and the subject lent itself to accommodating the structure.

During production it became apparent how feasible integration of theory into reality becomes. The documentary theories I proposed included exploring the subject from a more omniscient point of view. This is quite a natural approach for a filmmaker to approach and an audience to consume. Through multiple characters the omniscient viewpoint would jump back and forth in time and space and from subject to subject. This viewpoint represented the film's subjects well and lent itself easily to production. The only requirement was a commitment to adequate coverage.

My shortcomings in coverage dealt in part with crossing a certain line. This invisible line is the border that maintains screen direction. The rule is to concentrate on keeping the camera on one side of an axis or invisible line that runs between subjects. Rabiger calls breaking this rule

the, "cardinal filmmaking sin of 'crossing the line'" (p. 159). I did manage to respect the line that ran North/South between the two cameras. It was the East/West boundary between the workshop audience and the subjects that I couldn't resist crossing. I needed reaction shots of the audience. The other camera was in a poor position to get the shots so I picked them up. The shots had to be reversed in post production to be made useable so they would preserve the screen direction of the action.

One choice that greatly affected the visual quality of the documentary was between handheld or tripod mounted cameras.

The handheld camera is an intelligence on legs. The camera must move through space to change a shot and the changes of perspective alone make this physical relocation apparent. Something special emerges from successful handheld coverage: it gives the audience the feeling of a spontaneous, uncut event unfolding, and complements this with the sense of a discriminating intelligence at work. The tripod-mounted camera always 'sees' from the same point in space no matter which direction the camera pan, tilts. Even when zooming the perspective remains the same, reiterating how much the observation is rooted to an assigned place (Rabiger, p. 164).

The choice for tripods was out of necessity. I might have been able to perform through the three hour shoot for the workshop and end up with some decent shots. But the other camera operator was severely limited in physical stamina and required the tripod. To increase visual conformity I placed both cameras on tripods. There were times when I need to truck or dolly to a better position and had to do it roughly by hand. I had access to a dolly but did not place my camera on it. I regret that.

In evaluating the production phase I must focus largely on my interview skills. My relationship with the characters needs serious re-evaluating. I lost all confidence to push them, to drive them toward more concrete and specific responses during their interviews. The approach that I adopted was too submissive. In an attempt not to appear to dominate them and to

conversely foster their confidence, the interviews had a horribly lethargic pacing. Perhaps I didn't expect them to tolerate an inquiry that was more aggressive. As friends, peers, and colleagues, I should have trusted them to be a bit more accommodating.

I did manage to avoid interrupting the interviewee even though it led the course of the conversation outside the bounds I'd set for the interview and made the context of the next planned question rather meaningless. I had to gently steer the discussion back on course, usually succumbing to several more tangents before eventually getting back. But I did have a problem framing questions. I should have formulated questions so they were direct and specific and interpreted correctly. I tried to write focused questions that attempted to direct rather than follow the interviewee. (The interview questions can be found in Appendix A). This was a balance between closed and open ended questions. But, as Rabiger states, a "common pitfall is the long, rambling question with as many qualifiers that it ends up as a shapeless catalogue of concerns. The confused interviewee only answers what he remembers, usually the last thing said" (p. 143). I often fell into this pitfall.

I think it all boils down to believing in one's authority. "Many novice directors are too hesitant about their own role to act upon their ideas and intuitions for fear of rebuff. Remember that the mere intention of making a record- as a writer or a filmmaker- empowers one to be assertive and demanding. Most people unquestioningly accept your role as a seeker after truth and will collaborate to a degree that is surprising and on occasion very moving" (Rosenthal, p. 152).

After the first interview session I missed a great opportunity to acquire some really dynamic footage. As I was breaking down the set the interview subjects were milling about. Soon they began discussing the interview issues. Right then I should have stopped packing and shot a group interview. Their natural tendency to discuss, build, and evolve conclusions about the issues did a better job of extracting succinct and expressive statements out of them than the

single interviews did. During this dialogue, they were aiding and stimulating each other's memories to build a consensus about what actually happened during their first Gestalt session seven and eight years ago. Even though I had decided against the group interview long before production began, that exciting and impromptu discourse would have added a unique and valuable element to the film.

The major mistake of my shooting that plagued the entire production involved my manipulation of the cameras' sound setting. In order to set levels, I turned off the automatic gain control (AGC). This was unnecessary due to the sophistication and capabilities of modern AGCs. This resulted in audio with inaudible valleys and distorted peaks. The attempts to correct this error became a post production nightmare and it is very close to a fatal flaw of the final product. It is the single most detracting characteristic of the film.

During Dr. Vincent's interview, I set up a second camera from which to acquire a second angle of her testimony. I believed that since her footage might comprise the majority of the film, another angle would bring some visual variety to the mix. I did not use a single frame of that angle in the editing because the visual variety was not necessary for the finished product. Not having to spend time setting up and striking that camera may have provided enough time to discover and solve the audio problems.

The last criticism I have about the production phase has to do with Ethan's performance. He arrived and performed in the workshop unprepared. Even though he was provided with an additional two weeks to prepare, he had not entirely memorized his scene. He made a slight mention of it before the workshop. I should have pursued the issue to get a precise grasp of how debilitated his condition was because it had a distinct impact upon his performance. He was nervous and self-conscious. He was very agitated and could not relax and fully participate in the exercise. His discomfort can clearly be seen in his performance of the scene and in the Gestalt exercise. Several times he began to "get into" the exercise. But each

time he was instructed to use the scene material, all of his progression was wiped out as he concentrated on his lines. This made for a challenge in the editing. I had to cut out all of the awkwardness in the exercise when he would drop character and search for his lines. Almost all of the scene performances are cut due to this reason. The quality really suffers due to his condition. During the workshop, as I witnessed this rollercoaster of progress, I wondered if I should intervene. I feel that I should have interrupted the workshop and/or the scenework at least to tell Ethan he should have script in hand. At the very least I could have tried before the workshop to find out the extent of his problem and to persuade Ethan to read from the script. Another possibility was to have Julie or an audience member prompt him from the script.

Postproduction

I always focus a lot of energy into off-line work. Logging footage, transcribing, and building paper edits from the logs and transcripts all helps me gain control of the footage and the broader aspects of the project such as structure. I never regret spending so much time off-line. My logs and transcripts can be found in Appendix D. The paper edit is in Appendix E.

Even though the editing was conservative, I extensively explored editing rhythms in the way that Rabiger (p. 252) described as an analogy in music. I had sections of harmony where the audience hears and sees material from the same synchronous source. I also explored the counterpoint of seeing one kind of image while hearing another type of sound. The cutaway for illustration is one usage of counterpoint. For example, the documentary will cut away from the testimony of a subject to illustrate the topic as it is executed in the workshop. The audience's subconscious was already seeking more information about the topic elsewhere by visualizing what the subject is describing. The cutaway fills in the gaps of imagination and places the whole description into a further context that the audience can absorb. There's also dissonance.

Discrepancies are illustrated by showing images that literally counter the audio claims or metaphorically protest the audio claims (or vice versa: audio could protest the video).

Rosenthal bridges interview ethics into editing ethics with his statement that the "philosophy or ethics of interviewing are concerned with questions of sensitivity, fairness, and propaganda. Sometimes the question at issue is not how to conduct the interview but how to use the interview in the finished film" (p. 152). There was a large section where I explored the subjects' personal impressions of Dr. Vincent from their experience in her class eight years ago. Dr. Vincent was a controversial professor and her methods were at the heart of this provocation. The students in their interviews were more than able to express their opinions regarding her tactics, levels of disclosure, levels of trust, and the quality of relations between the Gestalt instructor and the student. It was later apparent that back then her methods were still in development. Because she has since forged safety procedures, qualifications for participation, and increased the levels of trust and intimacy between herself and her students, it became apparent that the only reason to pursue this avenue of inquiry would be to disparage her. That is why this line of questioning was not used in the film.

Many of my production choices affected my post production options. I would have preferred to have shot the workshop from a hand-held perspective in order to take full advantage of the freedom of movement it would have allowed. I could have chosen to instantly change the composition and relation of the camera to the subjects and added variation to the visual information of the film. I would have been able to walk up to the subjects and crouch down or raise the camera and shoot from above, maybe from a chair. I would have taken opportunities to compose the characters from behind with the audience as background, revealing the characters in extreme profiles. I would have constructed over the shoulder shots from behind an audience member, Dr. Vincent, or from behind one of the scene actors during their performance. However, one drawback to a hand-held perspective would be that my

movement and invasion of the actors' space might have increased their awareness of my presence. The situation and environment was potentially fragile. My proximity or sudden movements might have distracted them from their work. My presence might have caused a break in concentration or rhythm or caused them to drop character. In addition, the hand-held footage in editing might have seemed odd. When mixing together shots from the stationary tripod camera and the roaming hand-held camera, the fluctuations in the static nature of the shots might have added a visual discontinuity. Also, the visual variety that the camera movements would have produced might not have been worth risking tampering with the characters' performances.

During the post production phase I approached the workshop footage in a conservationist manner. In fitting shots of the actors activities in the workshop within their prescribed sections I decided to use longer shots. Specifically, these longer shots were of Julie in Stage One of the exercise and of Ethan and Julie as they worked through Stage Two. The extra length of these shots display each stage of the exercise as it naturally progressed. I felt that breaking these shots into smaller segments and then forcing them into an unnatural relationship would rid the footage of this progression. One of the most important characteristics of the exercise is how Dr. Vincent moves from tactic to tactic. It is extremely indicative and illustrative of her character and personality. It reveals how the actors react to her tactics. Most importantly, it illustrates how the exercise works. I decided to let these shots run long so they would illustrate specific progression from tactic to tactic and emotion to emotion. At first I was slightly concerned about these shots. The subject matter that they contained is provocative. The actors are making strong movements and powerful statements. The actors are being made to repeat these movements and statements over and over. The strength of the shots' subject matter is at such a powerful level that they only need a small dose to communicate their content. I feared that letting them run long would risk repetition and irritate the viewer. But the progress that these

shots revealed was more important than turning off the audience. This is especially true in light of the intended audience. I was aiming at a mature group who would patiently wait through the film's material, make informed, objective conclusions about the whole film, and conceive of why such a decision to keep longer shots in the film might be made. I decided to respect and preserve the form and rhythms of the original shots. I would not have been able to recreate and represent these rhythms and progress by assembling the broken bits of the shot. I think that the end results of these shots were worth-while. The shots' abilities to provoke and stimulate the audience are extremely valuable. To weaken that strength by cutting the shots short would be detrimental to the film. Also, the rich text of Dr. Vincent's progress of tactics is a very important part of her exercise and its inclusion becomes a valuable part of the film.

One of the major decisions made in the postproduction phase concerned a stage of the exercise. The documentary reports that there are three stages to the exercise, but in reality there are four. Stage four deals with audience feedback to the actor after he has completed the exercise and performed the monologue again. The intent of stage four is to provide a sense of closure to the proceedings and increase the transformation of the audience into a support group for the actor. During the preproduction phase of the documentary I was ignorant of this stage of the exercise. Apparently it was a recent addition. That is why mention of it and planning for it does not appear in the proposal. I did plan for the stage after learning of it. I brought along hand-held microphones for the audience to pass around as they each spoke to the actor and I planned shots and camera choreography to record the audience in this stage. I witnessed and experienced the rest of the procedure and knew what to expect and how to approach it. I did not know what to expect from this section because I had not previously witnessed it. The shooting of this section went rather well. The technical and aesthetic aspects of this footage are excellent. But the performance of the subjects is odd. Their statements were vague and generalized. No one really knew what questions or statements were appropriate. The

statements or questions they could find had little relevance in context. The workshop really began to drag at that point. So my first decision in the post production was to cut this stage of the exercise.

Another problem with editing concerned a missing section of the exercise that was not even performed. After Ethan and Renee's scene was performed for the first time it was Ethan's turn to work in the exercise. For some reason Dr. Vincent deemed him "ready" and jumped right on in to the second stage of the exercise. She completely skipped the first part, "Alone Onstage." Therefore, in the editing, no shots of Ethan appear that illustrate him in the first stage. To compensate, I increased the amount of footage that shows Julie in stage one. For both necessity and variety I took a few shots out of context and forced them into this section. There are shots of Julie that claim to show her in stage one. These shots were taken of her as she happened to be onstage before the workshop began. The other camera operator and I were adjusting equipment and the other subjects were assembling and preparing for the start of the workshop. These shots were taken as impromptu time killers to give the camera operator something to do since a subject was available to shoot. Other shots in the documentary show Ethan in stage one. These shots were taken in the same context as Julie's shots. Ethan and Renee were waiting for the next section of the workshop to start. We were all coming back from a break after Julie's work and starting to reassemble. As Ethan and Renee were pacing, the camera operator began shooting just in case the workshop might abruptly begin and some important moment, visual or audio, might be missed. It was the only shot of Ethan where he was truly alone onstage. The shot was easily taken out of context and placed into the section about stage one. It was a necessity. I had no control over the situation to direct Dr. Vincent into having Ethan go through stage one or go back and reshoot the moment. I don't feel that it was unethical or inappropriate to re-contextualize these shots. They succeed in their new positions.

One surprise of the production became a major concern during postproduction. This was one subject I suspect was impossible to uncover during research. At some point during the seven years between now and when I was Dr. Vincent's student, she made additions to the emotive universal words and phrases that the actors repeat. The actors and I were surprised by the profanity and adult content. For a while I thought it was vulgar and I was irritated that Dr. Vincent had not warned me. The profanity and adult content was rather effective, powerful, and emotive. It did add to the actors' catharsis. But I was concerned that my documentary would have content worthy of receiving an R rating. My first response was to plan to attempt to edit out the audio from the expletives. But, I decided to leave the words in at first and receive comments and opinions from the audience of my first test screening. They said that the profanity and other adult content was appropriate to the subject and deserved its place in the film. Those that knew Dr. Vincent and her exercise expressed the surprised realization that she should have added it to the exercise years ago.

I wrote earlier about the awkwardness surrounding my plan for the "Gestalt directing" of Ethan and Renee's scene. Another artifact of that deals with the amount that Renee appears in the film. During preproduction I always knew that she had to be a part of this film. I knew that she would be expressive, cooperative, and give a great performance. But Dr. Vincent had never Gestalted more than two people in a sitting. That's what I witnessed in class. Even if things had changed and she now did dozens of students per class period, the feasibility of exercising more than one participant becomes awkward. The procedure is as much of an emotion and energy drain on Dr. Vincent as the subjects. I needed her in good condition to deliver the conclusion lecture at the end of the workshop. Additionally, putting more than two people through the exercise is taxing on time. It takes about forty five minutes to put one person through the exercise. After gestalting two actors and giving the introductory and conclusion lectures, the workshop had lasted over two and a half hours. The attention span of the audience, the stamina

of Dr. Vincent, and the endurance of the actors couldn't take any more. The only way to include Renee in the workshop would be to have her as Ethan's scene partner. The idea was that Dr. Vincent could somehow Gestalt them both at the same time or if time permitted, separately. But, since Ethan's character drove the scene, he was the primary focus of the exercise. Renee's relation to the film became unusual. She wasn't Gestalted. She wasn't a main character. She had no significant contribution to the film. But she was a part of Ethan's scene. In the interviews she made comments about subject matter that Ethan did not. Those statements were incorporated into the film's essay. They are succinct and expressive. They are pillar statements of the essay's argument that no other character makes. So, Renee doesn't play a key role, but she can't be removed from the film. Cutting her out would leave a distinct hole.

The first and last parts of the exercise deal with the actors performing scripted material. These monologues and scenes were filmed as part of the workshop. The second performance reveals how the emotions discovered in the exercise can be employed. I faced some tough issues deciding how to incorporate this material into the film. I wanted to approach this footage with the same conservatism that I used when dealing with the exercise footage. I wanted to present the scene and monologue in their entirety. I wanted all four performances to be represented intact in the film. Julie's monologue would have been presented twice. Ethan and Renee's scene would have been presented twice. The relationship of the four scenes would have highlighted before and after comparisons. Differences in the scenes represented in this manner would have been dramatic. But I had to adapt due to necessity and prudence. Due to Ethan's memory, he and Renee never performed the scene in its entirety the second time. The lack of this complete scene prevented me from presenting all four scenes intact. My next plan was to present the largest blocks of the scenes for comparison and contrast. I backed away from this plan and instead exhibited very small portions of the monologue and scene work. I chose the best sixty seconds from all three actors. The first thirty seconds show the first performance. The

second thirty seconds show the second performance of the same line and how the actor has improved. The reason I backed away from larger blocks of the script was out of copyright infringement concerns. The scene and monologue they were performing were from copyrighted scripts. I did not permission to perform the plays in public, much less film and distribute them. I decided, for safety's sake, to show only sections of the script that were small enough as to not represent a performance and not require payment of royalties or securement of rights. I'm furthermore protected by the fact that the lines from the script that were captured and featured were incidental and environmental in nature, a part of the setting I was recording. The workshop isn't portrayed as an event constructed for the purposed of filming. The film witnesses the workshop as an observer not an instigator of the events. So, since the focus of my shooting was the actors and the exercise and not the script they were performing, I'm protected from liability against copyright violations.

Success in integrating proposed theories

Concerning theories about objectivity, I was never seeking pure, unfiltered “objective truth.” I was only seeking to remove my tendency to protect the subject in a way that would bias and hinder the reporting of the film. I did not enter any weak arguments to support the subject. I think I successfully integrated the theory of objectivity, or at least my interpretation of it.

I was able to share authorship with the film's materials. I heeded the need to let go (Rabiger, p. 172). When I sensed that my initial assumptions were being disproved, I had to let them go instead of pursue them further.

I'm still a little worried about ethical issues concerning responsibility to the audience. Without the evaluation of the subject's origins, development, and history, the subject is ultimately

left without a universal context. Without the exploration of the issues of safety and responsibility, without the warnings and descriptions of possible hazards, Gestalt Method for actors is set adrift again exactly where I discovered it. By merely illustrating it, I have taken on the role of Dr. Vincent's professor at SMU. Other actors will be exposed to it through the film and then co-opt it for their own purposes just like Dr. Vincent. Without guidance or instruction they will embark upon a potentially perilous journey of control experiments to implement the exercise in their fields. They will run into road blocks and obstacles, make mistakes and correct errors along the way, and refine the method further just as Dr. Vincent did and just as her teacher did before her. So, perhaps the demand upon the documentarian is merely to record. Cautions will be heeded by few. And those wise enough to heed caution are wise enough to figure it out for themselves in its absence. For those so inconsiderate to disregard warnings, the documentarian has wasted precious time and resources on in the attempt.

As mentioned previously, documentary was theorized to be the creative treatment of reality. I don't know that I expressed myself all that creatively in my representation of this reality. Documentary is also noted for its strong inroads into social criticisms and is the basis for many other documentary theories. Criticism wasn't my intent and it certainly was my outcome. Overall I guess you could say that documentary exists to conform reality into the confines of an organized story. That comes close to fitting what I've done. But instead of 'story' I like to think of it as more of an examination, an analysis, a portrait, a study, or a visual definition. The effort to describe the subject in cinematic terms essentially results in hold up a mirror to reflect it towards society for them to view. In that basic sense, this documentary is art because it basically succeeds in representing the subject.

Recalling the mirror and hammer models/metaphors of art's role upon society, I think that documentaries exhibit both traits in specific quantities. My work follows this trend: it is the

mirror to society in miniature (Dr. Vincent's little pond) and a hammer to the world at large (wanting everyone to experience the same emotional freedom as the subjects).

Finally, theories of structure and approach result in a unique concoction. Even though most of the film was an essay, I feel the structure of the film felt more natural than constructed. Parts of the essay played a narrative role. Much of the essay acted as an exposition where the characters and subjects were introduced and defined. Then the film moved into the action/conflict/climax of the workshop, which approached structure more narratively. Finally, the essay took over again but played a narrative role in the conclusion by delivering resolution.

I have previously stated how I feel that this documentary has met the minimum requirements of the project: recording the exercise. So, in conclusion, I must explore avenues of further production that would improve the documentary. I would like to reshoot the interviews one more time in order to fix the audio problems. If I had to do the whole project over again, I would chose to shoot Dr. Vincent's current students. I would like to witness what the year's worth of training she puts them through in order to qualify for the exercise does to improve their performances. I would also like to seek out Dr. Vincent's acting professors from SMU and interview them to explain (and resolve the mystery of) the genesis of the exercise. Perhaps they still perform the exercise with the theatre or school members where they are now. I would like to see how they have evolved the exercise's methods and applications. Finally, I would like to add my own voice and testimony to the film. I would like to add myself as a character both as a narrator/host and as a subject in the exercise. The willingness of the narrator/host to "put their money where their mouth is" would be a very effective tool in gaining the documentary audience's trust. I enjoyed going through the exercise six years ago. It has made me a better actor, human, husband, and father. I have unique access to my emotions. I have a healthier emotional life. That is what I would like to convey in my personal involvement in the on-screen action.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Dr. Vincent's Interview:

Here are the subjects and questions we'll cover. This is what the documentary's audience wants to know: (It is important to note that the documentary's audience has no prior knowledge of what this is. If they have heard anything about it, it would have been reported to them out of context and poorly represented. You may have to deflate a lot of myth and superstition.)

Short Answer section: (general now, more specific later)

Briefly explain who you are, what you do, your education, training, credentials, and experience.

What is Method Acting? (short answer, quick definition) What is the single distinguishing characteristic that separates it from other acting philosophies?

What is this thing you do? (short answer, quick definition)
(Is it an adaptation of a Gestalt Psychotherapy exercise?)

Whether it's an addition to, adaptation of, mutation from; explain how your Gestalt Exercise is an extension of Method Acting. (Short answer, quick definition)

How was it introduced to you? How & why did you start using it? (When did you start using it for acting? For directing? For teaching?)

Long Answer section:

Thoroughly explain the procedure, outlining each of its steps and stages (especially any jargon or terminology), each step's purpose, and desired results. How, why does it work?

Why is it needed? How can actors use it? How can directors use it? How versatile is it? (How can it be adapted for use in various situations?) How feasible is its use? (in professional theatre, academic theatre, community theatre, public school theatre?)

What additions have you made to it? Have you adapted the system any, made any extensions of it into new fields or uses, made your own improvements, developments, added accessories to adjust the method to fit your needs more efficiently? What all have you experimented with to make this procedure work better? What has not worked for you. What has failed?

What kind of attitude should an actor take towards the technique? What is the correct attitude that a director should have in using it? What qualities make a good Gestalter? What qualities are required to make them eligible to use it or go through it? (education, maturity, experience, etc.) How much training, education, skill, or experience should users have? What should a Gestalter know about his subjects? Themselves? Discuss the patient/client relationship and how special levels of it are required in this context. (Trust, intimacy, levels of objectivity, compassion, etc.)

Explain what general hazards are associated with this technique, how its is sometimes misused and abused, and how to avoid these risks. When is it totally inappropriate to use or employ this system? (what situations, theatre styles, etc)

Explain the controversy surrounding method acting (at least as it stands within the theatre community, due to its misuse & abuse.) Explain the various misconceptions about the method acting philosophy and practice (In other words, define the method and Gestalt by identifying what it is not.) The field and philosophy of Method Acting is seen as lacking unified standards, parameters, conventions, appropriate & certified methods, or ethical and moral guidelines. Why is this? How much of this viewpoint you agree with?

What moderations, regulations, or restrictions do you advocate imposing on Method Acting? (self imposed by users and educators) How much training, education, skill, or experience should users have? Explain why your system is necessary due to the previously mentioned misconceptions and misapplications (abuses.) Can this Gestalt system help to reduce the hazards associated with Method acting? Does it aid in the attempt to erect some standards, parameters, conventions, appropriate & certified methods, ethical and moral guidelines for method acting?

Actors' Individual Interview (before workshop):

Here are the subjects and questions we'll cover. This is what the documentary's audience wants to know: (It is important to note that the documentary's audience has no prior knowledge of what this is. If they have heard anything about it, it would have been reported to them out of context and poorly represented. You may have to deflate a lot of myth and superstition.)

Short Answer section: (general now, more specific later)

Explain who you are, what you do, your education, training, credentials, and experience.

What is Method Acting? (short answer, quick definition) What is the single distinguishing characteristic that separates it from other acting philosophies?

What is this thing she does? (short answer, quick definition)

Whether it's an addition to, adaptation of, mutation from; explain how this Gestalt Exercise is an extension of Method Acting? (Short answer, quick definition)

How was it introduced to you?

Long Answer section:

What do you know about it? What will happen? Thoroughly explain the procedure, outlining each of its steps and stages (especially any jargon or terminology), each step's purpose, and desired results. How does it work? What do you expect to get out of it? How do you feel about it personally? Are you apprehensive?

How can actors use it? How can directors use it? Have you? Did it, does it work? How feasible is its use in acting and directing? (in professional theatre, academic theatre, community theatre, public school theatre?)

What kind of attitude should an actor take towards the technique? What is the correct attitude that a director should have in using it? What qualities make a good Gestalter? What qualities are required? (education, maturity, experience, etc.) What should a Gestalter know about his subjects? Themselves? Discuss the patient/client relationship and how special levels of it are required in this context. (Trust, intimacy, levels of objectivity, compassion, etc.)

Explain what general hazards are associated with this technique, how it might be sometimes misused and abused, and how to avoid these risks. When is it totally inappropriate to use or employ this system? (what situations, theatre styles, etc.)

Explain the controversy surrounding method acting (at least as it stands within the theatre community.) Explain the various misconceptions about the method acting philosophy and practice (In other words, define the method and Gestalt by identifying what it is not.) The field and philosophy of Method Acting is seen by many as lacking unified standards, parameters, conventions, appropriate & certified methods, or ethical and moral guidelines. It is

the domain of zealots, extremists, sadomasochists, and nuts. Why is this? How much of this viewpoint would you agree with?

Explain why this system may be necessary due to these misconceptions and misapplications (abuses.) In other words, can this Gestalt system help to reduce the hazards associated with Method acting?

Actor's Group Interview (Before Workshop):

What is the single distinguishing characteristic that separates it from other acting philosophies?

Actors' Individual Interview (after workshop):

What happened?

How has it improved what you do? (acting, directing, teaching)

How did it work?

How did it feel?

How will you use it now?

APPENDIX B

BUDGET

Expenses	Item Analysis	Cash	In-kind	Total
Preproduction Costs				
Phone	120 min. @ \$.20/min.	\$24		
Online research services	\$21.99/month @ 7months	\$154		
Preproduction Sub-Total				\$174
Production Costs				
Camera Operator	\$100 x 2 operators		\$200	
Sound Operator	\$100/day x 8 days		\$800	
Camera Package	\$2100 x 2 cameras		\$4,200	
Camera film	\$20 x 28 tapes		\$560	
AC/DC adapter			\$150	
Camera batteries	2 x \$200		\$400	
Sound package batteries	35 x \$0.75		\$26	
Cables	2 x \$50		\$100	
Camera bags	2 x \$250		\$500	
Food for participants/crew			\$20	
Extension cords	4 x \$10		\$40	
Tripods	2 x \$115		\$230	
3 point light kit			\$500	
Microphones	5 x \$200		\$1,000	
Microphone stand			\$50	
Lamps	6 x \$3		\$18	
Food for Dr. Vincent	\$60/day @ 4 days		\$240	
Lodging for Dr. Vincent	\$80/day @ 3 days		\$240	
Airfair for Dr. Vincent			\$750	
Stipend for Dr. Vincent			\$200	
Actors' fees	\$1 x 4 actors	\$4		
Location fees				

Expenses	Item Analysis	Cash	In-kind	Total
Postproduction Costs				
Computer	1SGI 320 NLE		\$12,000	
Raid Array			\$3,200	
Adobe Premier			\$500	
SVHS VCR			\$1,200	
Monitor			\$200	
Audio Mixer			\$150	
Off-Line Computer			\$2,500	
SVHS Video tapes	20 x \$4		\$80	
Post-Production Sub-Total				\$19,830
Total Expenses		\$178	\$30,054	\$30,232

APPENDIX C
RELEASE FORMS

For the \$ 1 consideration received,

I give **Massive Video, Ltd.** Productions,

its successors, and assigns, my unrestricted permission to distribute and sell all

still photographs, motion-picture film, video recordings and sound recordings taken of me

for the screen production tentatively titled **"Theatre Gestalt"**.

Signed Dr. Renee Vincent

Name (please print) RENEE VINCENT

Address 509 Chattooga Pl
Beau Rivage
WILMINGTON, NC 28412

Date 4/3/99

For the \$ 1 consideration received,

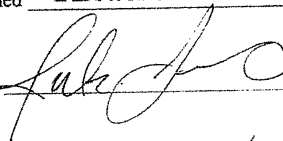
I give Massive Video, Ltd. Productions,

its successors, and assigns, my unrestricted permission to distribute and sell all

still photographs, motion-picture film, video recordings and sound recordings taken of me

for the screen production tentatively titled "Theatre Gestalt"

Signed



Name (please print)

JULIA ANN LEWIS

Address

233 PARADISE DR
HURST, TX 76054

Date

3-3-99

For the \$ 1 consideration received,

I give Massive Video, Ltd. Productions.

its successors, and assigns, my unrestricted permission to distribute and sell all

still photographs, motion-picture film, video recordings and sound recordings taken of me

for the screen production tentatively titled "Theatre Gestalt".

Signed Renée Ackerman

Name (please print) Renée Ackerman

Address P.O. Box 211565

Bedford, TX 76095

Date 4/3/99

For the \$ 1 consideration received,

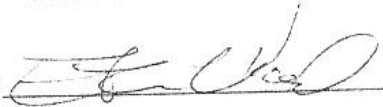
I give Massive Video, Ltd. Productions,

its successors, and assigns, my unrestricted permission to distribute and sell all

still photographs, motion-picture film, video recordings and sound recordings taken of me

for the screen production tentatively titled "Theatre Gestalt"

Signed



Name (please print)

ETHAN WARD

Address

600 UNIVERSITY CIRCLE # D107

COLLEGE STATION, TX 77840

Date

4/3/99

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW LOGS AND TRANSCRIPTS

Renee's First Interview

9:58-10:15

10:24 "It's an exercise. It helps you get to the product."

10:48 "I think that there are many people who haven't dealt with things in their life and they're not ready to deal with it in terms of the character even. They need to know themselves first. I don't think it would be fair to make the stage a place in which to let that, you know- vomit that- I know that's a harsh word- but a place to allow this to occur."

16:50 "I don't think she goes over the limit. I think she knows when to stop, but she knows which buttons to touch."

17:25 "She might find that memory, and once she knows she's found it, then she goes further with it. Then she's got to pull it out of you."

17:45 "She might have you just push it out of yourself, physically with your body. She might have you stomp it out of yourself."

18:03 "And once she has you there, then there's words that she wants you to add to it: Go Away."

18:19 "Get rid of it. Or bring it out so that it can actually be used in a healthy way. You know, don't leave it in there. It might be, "I love you." That's what she saw. "You hurt me" "Leave me alone" "Come back" "Why have you caused me pain" "Help me"

18:48 "I need, I need"

19:29 "I didn't know anything. She stripped me of everything. That method showed me that I didn't know anything.

19:43 "I guess there's a little apprehension. That's just, "Is it going to work?" But because I don't know any better, I'm ready to take the risk."

20:04 how an actor can use it 20:10 "I think that an actor can find a way, privately, to be so in touch with his own instrument, to know where to push his own buttons,

20:25 Renee gives herself a chill

20:30 "Is that method? Is that gestalt? I don't know. But it is something that I know how to do in order to give myself, either a tear, give myself- But it's real, you know, it's a real feeling.

21:09 Actors can do it to themselves 21:00 But I know how to do that with myself, by memory. That is directed only by me. Somebody can't ask me to do that. That's something that I can do. So it leads me to believe that an actor can take all of this process that has been given to him, each step, and do it for himself. I've not done that, and if I have I don't know that I have, but I might have.

22:00 Process vs. product warnings "And, so within the process. And again, I have to emphasize, I feel that it has to happen only in the process. When it's time to go onstage, you're onstage, and that's just coming on with you. You don't do that onstage.

23:39 How directors can use it "Again, as an exercise. I don't think it's done and then you say, "OK, now do all of that onstage." Because it might not all apply."

24:17 "I believe that, yes, that the director trains the actor to be able to do this for himself."

26:22 "It requires some basic skills before you even get there. It requires that the person, I think, have a pretty good sense of identity."

27:10 "Training, skill, and life experience."

30:50 "In addition to that, I'd like to say that if you're going to have anyone there to watch you do that, there needs to be a partnership and a trust with those people too."

31:12 "And somebody's not paying attention to me, or somebody is looking down while I'm doing it. It makes me nervous. It makes me think, "Why should I even bother doing this?" So, I don't know that I can totally be so concentrated on myself if I know there are people there who are hesitant, or there are people there who don't love me or don't trust me. That would make it very difficult for me."

31:37 “There’s such a vulnerability to it. I’m giving you my life. You know, love me, trust me. The audience is very important. Either be there for you or just not be there.”

32:23 “A passive actor is an ignorant actor. He can’t, he can’t be involved with it totally if he doesn’t understand everything that’s going on with it to submit himself totally to the pro- to the activeness of it.”

35:12 “Again, If an actor is willing to do this, total submission to the project. If an actor is hesitant about it-”

35:20 “Know that you have somebody’s life in your hands. That if you are willing to break down this person, have a trust, have a partnership with that person. Love that person. Be willing to be there for them afterwards. And then, of course, to help them translate that into their work. That it’s not just, you know, I’m not doing this to you just for your life, you know, there was a purpose for this. Now let’s get back to the piece of work that we were doing this for

37:14-37:50 “A director’s level of training, I think, goes beyond acting training. There’s, you really need to understand how a person’s mind works. And we all have different personalities. And we’ve all experienced different things.”

37:22 “You need to understand the psychology of the human brain. Experiences that, maybe, you haven’t had. You know, what are the possibilities that person has been through? And then just understand what your limits are.”

37:35 “Training in all different acting methods, not just in gestalt, not just in method. But an understanding in all different ways in which to get results out of an actor.”

37:58-39:05 Hazards “OK, so a director might do the gestalt method with an actor, a young actor who doesn’t have any basic training, or even has some basic training but has not tapped into these memories in a long time, maybe suppressed them at such a young age that doesn’t even remember. You know, he or she has blocked these memories. And a director has this gestalt, goes through the emotions, goes through the physical and brings it out through the

verbal, and then when it's over can't translate it, can't take it into the work, can't just act. You know, it's always the process with the acting. "Oh, I've got to tap into this memory right now." Just do it! You know, and the training has stopped there. The actor might not even be able to move on from that. It might live with them for the rest of their life and it didn't need to. And the actor may not have a way to get help, that goes beyond what an acting teacher can do. It's dangerous. You're working with someone's emotions and you got to be sensitive."

39:10 End

Renee's Second Interview

1:54 Renee introduces herself

2:45 Renee introduces herself (better sound)

3:44 What is method acting

4:15 What is method acting (better)

5:27 What separates method from other systems

6:00 What is this thing she does

6:22 What is this thing she does "Dr. Vincent has a very large background in method acting. She has a large background in all different styles of acting. She uses anything physical to reach a goal. She driven by movement. What Dr. Vincent does is she tries to reach a goal to really get to what is really happening underneath something, to really get to the root of something by doing it physically. So, where one person can put themselves into a mental mindset she physically gives that person the ability to make it become a whole thing. To make it not just about what they're thinking, but it's about how they're feeling, from the inside out. And so she physically helps you to get there.

7:16 Is the gestalt an extension of method acting

7:44 Is it a tool of method acting “This exercise is definitely a tools of method acting. It becomes a catalyst for you. You know, there are so many different tactics in which to get what you want, to reach an objective, but this is one way to be able to make that connection physically.”

8:19 what is the goal of the exercise 8:41 “But we want to be ourselves. we want to put ourselves into this. We want to have that connection together. So in order to reach that goal of this transformation from self to character to being, OK in order to reach this transformation of sorts this is a very helpful tool in getting you there without just saying, “OK I’m just going to act, I’m just going to be, I’m just going to do this.” you know, we put ourselves mentally, we do our warm up, but physically now we can give ourselves the chills that we need and make those connections through this gestalt method, and then reach that goal that entertains our audience.”

9:53 Does it help the actor to make more of a personal investment “Gestaltting another actor, a director Gestaltting an actor, Gestaltting yourself, will help the actor to have more of an invested interests in this to be able to reach that goal faster, to put more of themselves into it, because it’s all of them. It’s not just what they’re thinking. It’s not just the words on the page anymore.

10:30 “That’s coming from somewhere really real for you, because you’ve given yourself that opportunity to reach in there and find out what it is that you can connect in your life that is relevant to this character’s life, make that connection, and then just let it happen.”

10:52 How it was introduced to her, past tense description of exercise’s process(good)

11:38 “Puts us onstage, on at a time, and begins to ask us questions, and these questions are becoming very personal.” 11:59 “And she starts asking us these questions. She starts asking us to do things physically once she reaches just the right part of what she’s looking for, that button she’s trying to push. And she finds it, and then she starts to move into it physically, asking us to throw things away, and asking us to reach for things. And then she would do this other step where she would come up on the stage then and she would start touching us right here is that’s where she felt like the emotion was coming from. Or right here, maybe that would make us

laugh because that was underneath what I'm feeling really. And so she would do all these things interconnected with whatever she was trying to reach in the scene that we were doing. Find it in our past, something that she doesn't necessarily know about, was trying to make that connection, she was analyzing us through our body language, through a response to whatever questions she had asked. And from that response she added on a different tactic in order to go further with the response. And if that wasn't working she'd push another button and get that one."

13:15 Did it work (seven years ago)

14:22 Would it work better with more disclosure

15:38 How Dr.V's teaching affected her own teaching & acting

17:03 How she uses the exercise in acting

18:00 How she uses gestalt in her acting

18:40 How she gestalts herself

19:24 How she gestalts herself 20:46 "I make it happen for me. And then I've got it physically, I start it emotionally, and then the language can just flow out. Maybe it's crying, maybe it's something else, but whatever the emotion is I can make it happen for me through this method."

21:15 What she expects to get out of the workshop

22:15 Will it work better this time

23:31 Disclosure, the gestalt exercise's audience, this time vs. last time

24:23 Crying doesn't equal success other emotions are important "I don't think it's all about crying. I think there's- is that the only emotion we have? No. Gestalt's not about crying. Gestalt is about tapping into all of those different emotions. It might be about laughing.

24:50 Emotional blocks, layers "It is about removing emotional blocks. So many of us want to just say, "That never happened to me" and then it layers. You know, and then we just, "No, No

, No, no, no.” And so Dr. Vincent or yourself is like, “Let’s take that away, let’s that away, let’s take this away. OK, now..”

25:20 Peeling the onion “Dr. Vincent called it “Peeling the onion”. Peeling the onion. Take it layer by layer by layer. And when we get to the core of it that’s where we’re supposed to be. And for allot of people, I think that’s helpful for them, whether they want to use it in acting or not. But it’ll help them have a healthier relationship with another person. Just get to the root of something. That person doesn’t have to peel through all of it.

26:06 Fear of personal commitment, controversy of method acting “I think allot of people have allot of opinions about allot of things: especially actors.” 26:30 “So actors have very strong opinions about acting. I just don’t care. I just want to do it. I just have a really good time. So you hear these criticisms, “Oh, gestalt method, it’s just a crying game.” Well, if that’s what you think that’s fine. I don’t see it that way.”

26:50 Crying lessons “Those who call method acting, call gestalt “crying lessons” may be afraid of it. They may be. Or, you know, they have very strong opinions about it. May be they feel like it’s just something that should not be done. That if somebody is that, needs to be that connected to something they just need to do it on their own. That another person shouldn’t step into their life and do this. You know, and so, there may be some skeptical opinions about it. But, I don’t necessarily see it as crying lessons, though that is one result, great. Title it whatever you want. sure. “crying lessons.” great. Laughing lessons. Happy lessons.”

28:03 What do you do after the exercise: employment of emotions into scenes

29:21 High School, College, Community, & Professional Theatre: where the exercise is appropriate “So,Where does gestalt come in? I think it’s a very personal thing.” “In an academic setting, say college or graduate school, probably, better yet, we have special classes, I think, for this sort of thing. “OK, this is a semester of special projects on method acting with and extension of gestalt method.” Or, “In our advanced level acting class we’re going to spend

several weeks studying gestalt, and I'm going to work with you one on one. Does that make you comfortable or uncomfortable?"

32:27 Her philosophy about her using a diluted version of the exercise in her teaching

34:10 Instructor/Student/Group Relationship "You build a relationship so strongly with your students ahead of time you know what you can do and what you can't do." "The relationship with the instructor to that individual student, individual student with the rest of the group, the instructor with the rest of the group while it's happening with the individual student, it's imperative."

34:45 Knowing how far to go "With each individual student, it's just like anything else with teaching, behavior, whatever, you have to look at each kid individually, and with something so emotional, with a kid you just have to know how far to go and what you can do and what you can't do."

35:23 Partnership vs. Power "As a performer I've already mentioned that I find it, gestalt, to be something that I just do for myself, it's very personal, very intimate with myself. I don't need other people to be around for me to be able to make these connections. And it doesn't take very long to do it."

37:22 Are you apprehensive

37:55 Disclosure through empirical experience????

39:05 The goal of the exercise

39:37 Student's Ignorance of the process, her & Dr. V practice of exploiting it

40:49 Audience vs. no audience, vulnerability & support "As an actress, if I'm in an acting class, and I have built trust with the group around me, I really want that group to be there. I want them to share that with me. I want to be able to be Gestalted, that would be great, You know do this thing for me what ever you do, an the people around me can share this with me. And I think that's a beautiful thing. But if I don't know those people, I don't want them in

there.” 41:38 “Because my heart’s gonna get broken. This is me. It’s not a selfishness, or maybe it is. I know it’s not arrogance, “My stuff’s good. Listen to me.” It’s not that at all. It’s like, “ Why should I bother If the people around me don’t care?” Because it’s very personal, very intimate. And I have some vulnerabilities. So, if I have an audience I want that audience to love me and I want to love that audience. But I don’t want strangers. And I’ll do it in a class with a group of kids who really know each other, but I would never do it in front of a group they didn’t know.”

42:24 How would the exercise work with no audience “

43:00 Apprehension about being alone, supportive audience better “I feel like if I have some close people around me who I really trust and love that it would be a better situation for me. But don’t have strangers. I’d do it in front of strangers, but I don’t think it’s right.”

43:40 More about audiences

44:10 What kind of attitude should an actor approach this exercise with “I think an actor should be willing to do just about anything without compromising their believes. And if it means trying tactics and it means getting suggestions from a person to try something new, that you ought to try it and if you don’t like it, it doesn’t work for you then don’t do it.”

44:37 Preconceptions, fear of risk (actors’) “I think allot of actors are like that, “No I have my method, I have my way of doing it, I’m just going to do it my way. You go do your method stuff.” You know, and I’m just like,” Let’s try different things and I’ll see what works for me.” I know whatever I do is a combination of lots of different things.”

45:30 Multiple uses of multiple techniques (what combinations of styles work best for different actors) 46:05 “You have to find your own way of doing it. And I believe, especially for me, and I believe that for allot of people, that you take from lots of different places, and then you come up with your own. You know, I have Renee’s technique: lots of different system type things, little bit of method, you know, use gestalt when I need to, on myself, which to me is just an

extension of the whole method. 46:33 "I use allot of sense memory and emotional recall...

there's a common bond of all the different techniques that I think that everybody is very familiar with." 47:05 "But when we get into actually being, you know the moment we walk on that stage not every actor has done the same thing to get there. And I've done lots of different things to get there. Or maybe one thing. But whatever it is it's a combination of lots of things."

47:37 "I'll say that allot of actors use allot of different techniques and allot of different things in their training to do the things that they do and the best actors would. There are brilliant actors who just do method, or say they just do method. I'm willing to bet they do allot more than that."

48:40 What level of training & experience should an actor be required to have to participate in this exercise "Not everybody is prepared for this technique." 49:11 "Allot of people who I am friends with, this is why they're actors probably, have had allot of things happen in their life.

Dysfunctional families, issues with rape, other very very difficult things. Things that I am so thankful that have not happened to me. But that sort of thing that happens in a person's life would probably cause them to build all these blocks and not let people in and have a wall."

50:02 "Not everybody's ready for that. That's a very serious thing. For me it is not. I'm willing to take that risk." 50:25 "There are many people out there who have things happen that are still very fresh to them. That if they were to be Gestalted at that given time, after something has happened so recently, the result could be really dangerous for them."

hazards & actors who should avoid the exercise

51:03 Good or bad, just a tool "How can you say something is good or bad if it has some sort of benefit to somebody? "No, you're not supposed to do that!" "Oh, I'm bad, sorry." "You should be doing this." Well, can I just use a little bit of that and a little bit this? I mean this world: black and white. All right? But, why not take a little bit of everything? We do that with the rest of our lives. Why in our careers do we have to be black and white? In our careers we have to try everything."

51:52 Use of tool can be constructive or destructive “Gestalt as a tool could be constructive for someone who is very stable, could be destructive for somebody who is not stable. Or can be constructive for somebody who is not stable, and it may be just the thing that works through those problems for them. Others, it might send them right to the hospital. Or to suicide or something like this. I hate to be extreme, and make this so much more important than it is but certainly there are things that we do in our lives that better left alone.”

52:33 Trust between instructor & subject “I think that a person’s personal space is very important to them. And with gestalt, if you are going to build up a trust with that person that you can get into them, that you can delve into their emotions with them, you have to be, you have to have that trust with them to get close to them too. To make a person cry you have to be willing, willing to take the risk to love them, and to hug them and to hold them afterwards. And if you’re not willing to take the risk to love the person afterwards don’t do it.”

53:29 Is method & gestalt a distraction away from theatre’s true objectives “Gestalt, method acting; this could all be a distraction away from the real objectives that’s happening in a piece.”

53:53 “You can’t allow the emotions to take control of you. You can’t allow the emotions to take control of you. You have to allow them to be part of your preparation”

54:53 living truthfully the given circumstances, going after objectives 55:21 “I’m not going to spend that moment trying to cry. I’m going to spend that moment being, living truthfully these given circumstances, reaching that objective regardless of what emotion gets me there.”

56:00 describe the emotive tools used to stimulate the subject: I need & go away, & silliness, touches, motions, words 56:23 “Here she is having you look silly.” 56:46 “Come to me” or “I want you”, “I love you”, “I need you”. And so I’m physically pulling it in. You know, and that may not work, but it may cause me to have another emotion because of that. Maybe I get so angry with her because she made me do that. Oh, she knows there’s something else to reach into. So it moves from and then it, “Go away.” I gonna be stamping my foot with a, “Go away.”

Right, and I might just think that's hilarious, because here I am doing this stupid thing, "Go away", right? "This is not working, Dr. Vincent." Right, so then she might try something else, because that wasn't working. So she might move on to, you know, actually hitting something, "Stop it". "Stop it." "Stop it." Physical pain. Consistency with it. Until I'm so long it's like-

57:37 Good Will Hunting

57:55 continue describing the exercise's process "There's an excellent example of gestalt. She might have me do that consistently until it causes another emotion. You know, and then I might get there, here, and I might be on the verge of laughter, on the verge of tears, but I'm not quite there and doing more of this isn't going to do it. Well that's when she starts getting closer. She starts getting into your personal space. That's when she starts doing this sort of thing. Maybe it's at the eye. Maybe when she walked up to that stage, or she took me right through that emotion, it got me to the point where the tears are right there, but if she stops now they won't come out, but if she goes like this, they'll start. Or this, I might laugh."

58:45 "Whatever it is, she finds the way, she's got a process from beginning to end that starts verbally, that goes into the physical thing, then goes into her getting into your personal space, and then it connects the emotions with the physical, comes out verbally in your performance."

59:05 Isolation in front of the group 59:09 "I learned this From Dr. Vincent. That the first thing that I do in starting this method is have the student, and she did this with me, just stand there.

Isolated. To stand there isolated." 59:25 "All in a circle and one in the center. And just go one person at a time and look at them. And then look at the next person. And then look at the next person. And until I've looked at every single person in the room, then I can begin. Or they can begin. And she just had me stand there and do nothing." 59:50 "And then, you know, I want to laugh, I want to smile." 1:00:04 "But, it does start with isolation. And I think that's very effective."

1:00:42 why do the universal emotive phrases work “I think it’s manipulation. She’s manipulating your mind into causing some sort of reaction, and explosion.”

1:01:00 go away “I think the actor can. I think that the actor’s getting the tool in order to do it for himself. But if the actor can- yeah it’s a very common thing, a universal phrase. OK, “Go away.” All right, she’s asking me to tell somebody to go away, tell something to go away. I was telling her to go away. You know. So it could have been anything. It may not be what she thought it was going to be, but it was something.”

1:01:31 End

Julie’s First Interview

1:52 Julie introduces herself

2:29 Fort Worth Shakespeare In The Park

3:00 Method acting “An acting technique that allows an actor to bring experiences from their own life, their own emotions into their work rather than just presenting...”

3:28 Method acting

4:00 What separates it from other philosophies “Actually having the emotion as opposed to trying to present what the emotion would be like were you having it.”

4:17 “If you learned it correctly, if you learn how to work this system that Stanislavsky came up with then you know where to tap to find these emotions you can do them when it’s necessary you know what feelings to tap into as to when you’re doing a presentational type of acting, which is kind of blind luck, every once in a while you’ll stumble across an emotion that really comes out and works for you, but if you try to recapture that in the next night’s performance, say, you can’t because you don’t know where it came from, you don’t know what you tapped into or where it stems from.”

4:53 What is this thing she does “She tries to break down the energy blocks you have. I used to complain because I spent several years building these absolutely wonderful walls and masks that I didn’t let anyone behind. And the whole point is to break down those walls and masks and tap into your true emotions. Not necessarily discussing them or finding out what the source is but to find the emotions. Because if you can’t express an emotions in real life, how can you express it onstage?”

5:36 The goal of the exercise “Tap into it and find out how to relate that to your work. To use it- she’s not trying to make you a basket case or make you deal with some child-hood trauma. Now some people may do that because of what’s happened, but that’s not the purpose of the exercise. The exercise is to teach you to free your emotions to break down your blocks and your walls and your barriers and express an emotion so that you can learn to do that onstage, otherwise- I’ve been the queen of turning on and off the waterworks and tears onstage, but for real actually letting someone see past me and not crying because I know they want to see me cry, there’s a huge difference. So it teaches you to express your emotions truthfully.”

6:25 How it was introduced to her & how it worked

8:45 What she knows about it, what happens: motions, phrases, procedures, emotions, process, purpose, goals “There were physical and verbal prompts. She would have you do these physical, non-verbal motions, repetitive. She would make very vague suggestions. Things like, “I need” or “I want” or “Good girl” or “Go away”, things that to the audience watching, they didn’t know how they would affect you or why they were affecting you. But to you it’s like looking at your horoscope. You can change it to match your life however, you can make it appropriate.”

9:44 “You get these prompts of “Go away” or “I need” or “I want”. and you convince yourself that Dr. Vincent has been talking with all of your professors or going through your file in order to find out what kind of trauma you’ve had in your life. And she’s teasing it, pointing at it.

10:03 “You repeat these statements that she gives to you while doing some physical action that, I think, it’s supposed to, like method acting, combine the body, the voice, the spirit, the soul, that sounds really granola, I’m sorry, but It combines everything, makes you realize that they’re all one, so that when you do these physical actions and when you repeat these statements it’s kind of trying to make you release, break down the walls, break down the barriers that you have.”

10:30 “Now after the release, after you break down whatever you’re trying to hide, she makes you repeat it, you feel like you’re unsuccessful if you don’t have an emotion, if you don’t laugh or cry or have some sort of outbreak, but that’s not necessarily true, it could be subtle. But you repeat this. She sees where your physical blocks are, where you’re tightening, where you’re keeping your energy, and she’ll touch it lightly just to make you aware, ‘cause it’s all about awareness, being aware of where you’re blocking out your emotions, where you’re hiding everything. Mine was always in my neck and shoulders. I would tense up, my shoulders would touch my ears, practically. And she would just lightly tap it so that you would become aware, and you would start to let go, and she would try to push down to make your muscles relax. And that’s when usually some onslaught or flow of emotions could come out because you- It’s all one, your mind, your body, your spirit. And once your body starts to relax, your emotions come out, all these things you’ve been trying to suppress and hide start to rise to the surface.”

11:35 “Once these emotions would rise and bubble and come out she’d congratulate you, stop you, and shove you into a scene. To try to make the connection back to, “We’re not trying to psychoanalyze you. We’re not-” Because Gestalt deals with the present, the here, the now, the emotions you’re having, not the childhood memory that you’re dealing with causing these emotions. It wants to deal with you are freeing up yourself to have an emotion. Psychoanalysis is dealing with all that past childhood crap that you don’t want to talk about and you don’t want to

deal with. This is much different. You deal with the emotion and then she puts you in a scene to try to make you foster it and use it in your acting.”

13:23 Stages & steps of the exercise “She would stand us up alone with the class watching. She’d stand us up onstage and say to just breath, just relax. And we’d stand there for a moment, eyes boring holes into us from our fellow peers. We’d relax and then she’d start in with making us aware where our tension was: slight touches on the side of the cheek. That’s one of my personal favorites where she’d rub the side of your cheek. With our shoulders she’d push down if she felt tension there. In our arms or legs she’d just touch to make us aware. And then she would make some suggestion, make some small phrase, some vague general phrase, “I need”, and make us do a movement with it, a non-verbal exercise of sorts that we would repeat. The point is, I believe, is to break down your walls, to allow yourself to make, put this into whatever context is going to work for you and produce an emotion. If you go into it with the right attitude I’m sure that- this repetition, this simple physical acts of touch, making you combine your emotions with your verbal and your physical and realizing it’s all one. I suppose it does produce the desired result, it causes you to release to let go of the tension and actually let yourself feel.”

15:51 “We would also, when that wasn’t working, when I was doing the “I need” and it wasn’t working, I started with, she had me stomp, push my hands out and say, “Go away, go away, go away, go away.”

17:00 how the actor can do this on their own “What caused you to feel this way, so that you can use it again, so that you don’t have to go through this huge gestalt experience every night before you go onstage. It’s to find, “OK, what buttons did she push and how can I push those on my own. how can learn to, say, “This is what makes me feel this way, and this is how I can use it onstage.” But then once you make the connection, I suppose, you can put it into the, she

would have us do the scenes again and you put it onto the scenes and learn to emote and learn to make the character live as opposed to the painting version.”

17:42 What she expects to get out of it (the exercise/workshop)

18:12 “Well that’s not the purpose of gestalt. It’s not psychoanalysis. It’s not delving into your childhood trauma. It’s learning to emote. It’s learning to free these energy blocks that you’ve created so that you won’t have to deal with them.”

18:34 Goal of exercise “It’s to teach us to emote. Because we have spent so many years trying to be socially correct and not be upset about things and let things affect us. Well, the whole purpose of this exercise, I believe, is to teach you how to let things affect you. Teach you how to have an emotion.”

**18:52 nervous, but wants to learn how to do it to herself on her own

19:45 how actors can use the exercise, what it teaches them to do (emote) “I think it’s almost essential to have an emotion. Like I said, if you can’t have an emotion in real life, how can you portray one onstage? How can you have one onstage instead of just faking it? For an actor to be able to tap into, to break down the walls and the masks that we have to wear everyday to put up this great facade so that people will believe we are completely in control... in order to tear those down and have an emotion, I mean, by doing that it’s going to make you such a better actor, so much more believable, because you will be able to have an emotion, you won’t have to say, “This is what my character would look like were she really upset.” You can be really upset. It’s a freedom, I think. It’s freeing. it’s empowering. You have this sense of, “I can do this. I can have an emotion. I can feel however I want to feel. I can do whatever I want to do.” And the stage, that’s why allot of us are there. We love the art we love the stage. We love to be able to go onstage and have the freedom to express things that in normal life we would be shunned for. To do things that in everyday life would be unheard of. Onstage you can do that. People want you to do that. They want to see you have an emotion so that they can for a split

second live vicariously, say, “This is what I could be like if I could tear down my walls and break all those blocks and be able to have a true emotion. That’s who I’d want to be. that’s I want I-” it gives them that little spark that they’re missing. And without being able to have these emotions, faking it, portraying, you cheat them, you cheat yourself.”

21:44 rehearsals, auditions, performances (actors using the exercise in those environments)

22:37 method vs. system actors (being able to improvise and live in the moment, cover mistakes)

23:55 how directors can use it????

26:30 Public School, academic, Professional, & Community Theatre (how feasible the exercise’s use is in each environment)

27:17 College setting (w- disclosure) “In the college situation, I think it’s a wonderful idea. I think that’s the point where you’re supposed to be experimenting and trying to find your niche. And I think it’s great to try it if you explain it. If you let them know what’s going on. And if they’re willing. And if you, give it as an option. “This is what I want to do to help tap into these natural resources you have. And this is what is going to happen. And this is how, stereotypically, it goes. Are you willing?” And then those that are can benefit. And those that aren’t, you’re not wasting your time. And you’re not trying to- ‘cause it is someone’s, someone’s emotions, someone’s life you’re dealing with. You’re not, there’s no chance of, hurting those that aren’t ready to be, to feel that.”

28:14 Disclosure, trust, relationship between instructor & subject

29: 35 Professional & community theatre (w- references to college) “This is why I think it’s great for the college atmosphere, because once you get into a professional theatre they’re not going to have a whole lot of time to sit around and gestalt you.” “Your job as an actor is to tap into those emotions.” “Because you’re supposed to come in there with all your facilities ready. Their job is simply to incorporate it as a whole. Now, in the college atmosphere you have time

to work through these. You do warm-ups together. You find this creativity, this inner light. But in professional theatre you've got to have it already. You've got to be there and be ready to go. And so, yes, I think that gestalt is that's appropriate for that. But it's got to be something that you don't expect them to do for you when you get there. You need to learn to do it for yourself."

30:44 Professional actors should be prepared on arrival

32:28 Active/informed vs. passive/ignorant

33:02 It would have been better if she'd been informed

34:35 Having ignorant actors is dangerous

35:00 What the exercise teaches actors to do

35:25 What her attitude is this time around

36:55 What the exercise gives you "I think, it gives you the experience of having the emotions you wouldn't otherwise have. It lets you know, I mean, how can you know what true fear is, or misery, or excitement or lament. How can you know what these things are unless you experience them? And if you don't allow yourself to experience them how are you going to have these emotions onstage? This is a tapping of your emotions, letting you know what the gamut of these energies are and once you see yourself, once you feel yourself express these, once you know how they feel, then you'll know it onstage. You'll know it when you're- Until you let yourself have these emotions- before I'm- We don't let ourselves express, let ourselves feel misery, that's too painful. We don't let ourselves feel fear. We find ways to cover it up and hide it and block it and, "I'm just not going to deal with that right now," Well, this makes you deal with it. Not deal with the things that happened, but deal with the emotions. So that you can deal with them onstage, so that you can have them onstage."

38:15 What makes a good Gestalter

39:35 Trust between subject and group

40:15 Trust between subject and group

41:33 Support from group

43:00 Private, intimate process

43:55 Group or private sessions of the exercise

45:47 Who are you saying “go away” to “It’s a fortune cookie. It fits into whatever context you so choose. So if you choosing to tell your peers that are watching you, “Go away,” as they’re boring the holes through your head, staring at you, judging every move you make, then that’s your prerogative. If not then your saying it to some scary monster that used to scare you as a child. It’s whatever. That’s the best part about it, is that it’s so vague you can make it into whatever you is appropriate for you. It’s universal. It’s a fortune cookie. It’s a horoscope.”

46:52 Crying lessons “Crying lessons. No, I don’t agree. I can see how someone would perceive that. It’s tapping into your emotions, it’s learning to deal with them, be it crying, be it fear, be it laughter, whatever emotion you happen to find when you break down your walls, when you take off your mask. Now, yeah, for a bunch of us it looked like crying lessons. But, It’s just learning to find your emotions. It’s not- I can cry on cue. It doesn’t mean that I’m feeling an emotion. It means that I’m showing you what you want to see. This is getting to the truth, dealing with whatever it is that you don’t want to deal with, that you’ve bottled up. But not dealing with it so much as just finding the emotions. Dealing with the emotions, letting yourself feel for once instead of hiding it because it’s not socially acceptable to feel that way.”

48:00 harvesting the emotions so they can then be employed into the scene work “That’s not what it’s about. It’s saying, “OK, I know that I can feel this way.” Because, for someone who’s never let themselves experience grief, suddenly they’re portraying a character that has to experience grief- How’s he going to do that? You don’t know what it feels like.”

48:30 End

Renee's First Interview, Post Script (On Julie's First Interview Tape)

48:30 What she expects to get out of the workshop and the exercise

49:42 Crying lessons "Again, I think allot of people don't understand what it is. And perhaps if they really do understand that it is like crying lessons for them. I think that it is just whatever you want to make it to be. You know, there may be one purpose for gestalt but I think it serves different purposes for the individual. Any type of acting is an individual process." "If the individual in that process thinks that it is a crying lesson and they need it for a crying lesson, then use it for that."

50:20 Not limited to crying "I don't think it's limited to that at all, no. Because there's- Is that the only thing that it's used for is for something that causes tears? No, there's other things that we express physically from emotions. Laughing even. Some of us have difficulty laughing for real and not fake laughing. All right? I do. So tap into some thing that is just so hilarious for me that it's a real laugh."

50:54 End

Julie's Second Interview

1:56 Julie introduces herself

2:33 What is method acting

2:50 What separates it from other acting philosophies

3:25 Is it more real

3:39 What is this thing she does "This thing she does, it's called gestalt techniques, it's a type of psychology, I've never really seen it done in combination with acting before, to where you become aware of your blocks and your emotional suppressions and allow your self to exercise

and have those emotions, to free up any kind of blocks that keep you from expressing them or experiencing them.”

4:20 Is the gestalt exercise an extension of method acting “In a way, yes, they seem to go hand in hand. they- method acting insists that you have these emotions, that you experience them and not just show what would happen if you had- if you were having an emotion. And gestalt is what causes you to free them, to let you, lets yourself experience them. So I think they really do, it seem like a natural combination.”

4:55 how it was introduced to her

5:26 Describe the steps and stages of the exercise “First your asked to stand and become aware of your physical being, where your tensions is, where your blocks are. She will touch certain parts of your body that seem to be tense or, I don’t know, unnatural. If you look like, your stance, there’s some kind of block, there’s some kind of, you know, when someone gets tense their shoulder tend to rise up to their ears, or they stand a certain awkward way because they’re holding tension You simply become aware. She touches these places and says, “Look, these are where your blocks are.” And once you, I guess, try to adjust yourself to it, she’ll repeat very vague little sayings.”

6:15 Universal sayings “Things that don’t necessarily mean anything to anyone else out of context, but you but them in your own context. You, she’ll say, “I need” and you create in yourself what this “I need” means. And then there are simple gestures that go along with it, that combine the emotions, the physical, the verbal mantra that you’re chanting with these slight movements, these gestures, like moving your hands like this when you said, “I need,” or pushing away when you say, “Go away.” These tend to go with the phrase that she’s using. But simple little gesture that you repeat over and over again.”

7:00 then there is an emotional release “And after that, usually some kind of, I can’t say when it works, because you can’t make it work, it’s something that you really can’t force. But should

you have an emotional release this can cause it, these simple little movements and phrases over and over again. Your mind just, your subconscious starts to work, I suppose, your mind reaches in and, whatever, finds a way to make it appropriate for you, finds a way to delve into some kind of emotional tap and there's usually a release. It could be crying, laughing, anger, but for some reason, that I haven't quite made a connection to yet, it can cause a release. I can cause you to discover emotions that you didn't know you had or were capable of."

8:05 What her attitude was when it was introduced to her

9:10 Did she have a second session

9:56 What she expects to get out of the workshop/ exercise

what the exercise teaches actors, the goal of the process "As an actor and be able to perform. I would like to be able to tap into some emotion and to say, "That's where that is, that's, I know how to get to that now." Because how can you openly weep onstage if you can't openly weep in life?" "It's an exercise to teach you where these emotions lie and that you are capable of them. And I'd like to be able to do that. A comment Dr. Vincent had made about me when I was in school is that I have a problem trying to be what's expected of me as opposed to who I am. And it's true. I can cry on cue, I can show any emotion that you lay out on a piece of paper in front of me and tell me to do. But they're not real. I would like to be able to truly express something and see if that works onstage. I haven't had a lot of experience with method acting. But I'm open to try. I'd like to see where it goes just out of sheer curiosity."

11:35 Will it work better this time, disclosure

12:28 Disclosure

13:16 Active or passive process

14:18 Universal emotive words and phrases

14:59 "But the statements are, really, what you make them out to be. The thing I like gestalt as opposed to some other psychoanalysis is that this isn't dealing with the past and what's

happened to you throughout your life. it's dealing with your present emotions. And as long as it stays in the present there's no need to go in afterwards and talk about what you've discovered. You've found this emotional spring that you can now tap into as an actor. It's not some one- You don't need to be a psychologist to practice gestalt. I think you need to know what you're doing. but you don't need to go in after wards and work through some childhood trauma with the actor that you've done this with, and not done this to, it needs to be a joint experience. But the statements, the phrases are universal, they're a fortune cookie, they're a horoscope, you can twist and turn them into whatever you want them to be, they will seem appropriate. but it's not because they are, it's because they're universal."

**16:23 How actors can use this "You use this as a springboard. As a way to discover- A means of discovery. A way to discover what those emotions are and where they're hiding. Now how you tap into them is up to you."

17:35 Can actors do it by themselves, they need a guide, a facilitator, and instructor "I'm saying use the experience where someone else is helping you through it to discover where these emotions are and then find that personal exercise that you can tap into them. This is simply a method of discovery."

18:10 The exercise as a centering exercise, doing it on your own vs. with a coach

18:55 How directors can use it, hazards of misuse, professional theatre "I think that it is very dangerous for someone who does not know what they are doing, does not know what they are getting themselves into to jump in and say, "OK, today I'm going to gestalt my high school class." This is not safe."

20:18 Has she ever tried it, method & system issues: the need for this exercises "I became the anti-method girl. I was a firm believer in 'stand in your place, say your lines, move where you're supposed to, and all will come out well.' And that works sometimes. But there's still even for those people that say, 'I'm not method. I am the actor on the stage and I'm simply doing my

job.' There are those moments when you, when it happens right. When you find that emotion and you're really having it and it's controlled. But they're few and far between and I think something like this- and pursuing even other method techniques can teach you where it comes from. Because those few moments that you have them when you're not- that they happen on accident. You can't repeat that. You can't go back and do it again."

21:30 one powerful scene vs. six month run

23:28 feasibility of the exercise in academic, public school, community, professional theatre "As far as gestalt and the feasibility in educational theatre, I think that's the perfect place for it." "But in college, I think that's where we're supposed to be discovering what tools we have to work with, what our instrument is. That's the time for it. That's the perfect time for it." "You need to learn how to be, how to have this emotion. That should be an actor's job on their own. Which is why this is perfect in college. Which is why this is, university is an ideal situation for it. Because that's when you need to find out what you're capable of. And move on from there."

25:00 requirements of subjects' skill, experience, maturity "You need to go into it with an open mind and ambition." "If you're not in the right frame of mind all you've done is had an exhausting, emotional experience. What's the point?" "If you're doing it just strictly as an actor in an exercise and trying to better yourself you need to be in the right place for that."

26:11 Crying lessons "I can see how some people would criticize and call it crying lessons. The first time I went through the experience I would have been right on that bandwagon. These are crying lessons. It's not just crying."

26:55 "I am definitely a person that is not prone to fits of giggles and laughter and expressing great joy. You can say that I'm fairly mellow. But I know that's within me somewhere. Why is that any less of a successful experience to find out how to be joyous and happy or at least how to express that. So it's not crying lessons. It's emoting lessons."

27:50 more than crying is the goal of the exercise “Gestalt is not necessarily crying lessons.

Crying is not the only suppressed emotion. Joy is an emotion, fear, anxiety, any of these things- if you don’t cry you’re not a failure. If you don’t emote you’re not a failure. It simply didn’t pull anything out of you that time, or maybe it did, but maybe it’s not huge and big, maybe it’s subtle. There’s definitely something to be said for subtlety.”

28:31 “It’s not a crying lesson. It’s a lesson in letting yourself emote. it’s learning to experience as opposed to faking it.”

29:00 What attitude the subject should bring to the exercise “Actor’s should have an open mind and be ambitious about the experience, really want and desire to accomplish something for themselves, not for the acceptance of their peers, or for the admiration of the professor that’s doing the exercise for them. You need to be self-involved in this experience. You need to get out of it every little drop that you can for yourself. That’s why you should do it. You shouldn’t, there should be no, ‘I’m doing this because it’s an exercise that I need to do because my teacher says so. I ‘m doing this because everybody else is, or because I want everyone to see that I’m just as open and free and emotionally mature as the next guy.’ You need to be ambitious, you need to be active, and you need to be open.”

30:00 What the attitude the coach/ director should have toward the exercise & subject “The person that is actually doing the process to the actor needs- A director first of all, whether gestalt or not, needs to be delicate of the actor’s stereotypical sensitive ego, what they’re dealing with. You’re dealing with someone’s emotions in this case and it can be sticky, it can be scary. Things that they’ve never experienced before. And I think that a director should be responsible for not doing this to someone that they don’t feel is ready. You should be sized up. There should be an interview process. A discussion.”

30:46 “Are you ready to go for this? Are you ready to do it? And if they’re not, don’t waste either of your time. Because there’s just bitterness and resentment after that. But I think that the

director should also be limited in what they expect to happen. be open to- I mean, don't be insulted if this person isn't ready. They think they are. They say they are. They get up there and nothing happens. It's not a failure on anyone's part. This is an adventure. You're delving into new territory. You're trying to discover something. So, how can that be a failure? Regardless of what you do or don't discover?"

31:51 Power vs. partnership "They're a god. I can make you laugh. I can make you cry. I can make you break down and you have no choice in the matter. I can choose how you feel. definitely can't go into it with that attitude."

32:45 "There has got to be a trust. I have got to feel that this person that's on this journey with me is with me, is doing it as a collaboration to make a discovery, not as a means to mock me."

33:30 Hazards

35:45 Hazards "There needs to be a trust or else someone's going to get hurt. It can't be successful, I don't feel. You can't uncover, you can pretend to. You can tap into emotions that you have that you're not ready to deal with. You can look like the experience is working but it really doesn't unless there's a trust and a bond. because you're not- So you fall to pieces in front of them, so you cry, where- what happens after that? Where are you going from there? You do, what? Your scene for the class and it's successful, you can cry in your scene. OK, after that? Two years from now, when you've graduated, where's the success of the experience? What has it done for you? You need to know what to do afterwards."

34:54 "After you've done the exercise, what has it accomplished for you? If you didn't do it for your film take, for your- where are you after that? What do you do? Because if you can't use it, then what's the point? You simply had a big emotional day. From that point, you go home and you still can't bring it up onstage. How do you tap in after you've found where the emotion lies?"

37:28 Constructive use of emotions, constructive discovery

38:40 Neither good or bad but a tool, how its used, find what works for you, multiple explorations of multiple techniques, schools, systems of acting “This is neither good or bad. It completely depends on how it’s used. Gestalt technique, if it’s not right for you, if you’re accomplishing anything, why waste your time? Like I said before, you’ve got to be completely selfish in this experience. Find what works for you. Find what causes you to have an emotion.”

39:25 “Find what works for you and go with it. But don’t be closed-minded. Don’t say, “I’m not going to experience this.” If you haven’t found that thing that works for you yet, try everything. Try every technique. Try method, try anything.”

39:54 “I can’t see as to how it would be appropriate in vaudeville or stand-up comedy. I, mean, But, like I said, again, who’s to say? It’s- for me, what works is completely different than for somebody else.”

41:42 Obsession with emotions is sometimes a distraction from true objectives of theatre/ characters “If you bog yourself down in “I need” and “I want” and “Go away”, if you spend all your time trying to discover what makes you feel the way you need to feel, then, absolutely. It is a block. It is in the way.”

42:23 “That’s why this is perfect for the university setting. This is a discovery. This is the time that you get to wallow. This is time that you get to find these emotions and play with them and tinker around and find out, I mean, the cliché: “You’re discovering who you are. You’re out to find out.” This is the age, this is the time, this is when it should be done.”

42:47 “Once you’re onstage, concentrate on your objectives, what you’re supposed to accomplish as the actor, what your wants and needs are in the script, and what, when you’re in your light. These are things that wallowing in emotion can definitely hinder. But, yes, I think that it, allot of people do let it get in the way. But, I don’t think that means it’s a bad thing. I think that, like everything else, it needs to be controlled. Done in moderation. Done as a discovery. And then you move on.”

43:20 Objectives & emotions “But objectives, they’re what the emotions come from. These emotions, you can’t play ‘happy.’ You can’t play ‘sad.’ You can’t play at these things.” “It’s those obstacles that cause the emotion, in the way of your objective, what you’re trying to accomplish.” “This is conflict. That’s what makes an interesting play, film, commercial.”

46:37 Skeptics “There’s going to be skeptics that say, ‘This is a bunch of emotional hoo-ha. What’s the point? Why do I care if you’re up there blubbing?’” This is not for some one else. this is not a means of entertainment.”

47:10 Audience or no audience “I feel that this isn’t a performance. That if you’re in a group setting, in a class, and you’re all experiencing this together, and you’re working as a team toward and eventual goal that everyone is aware of, that everyone knows the process, not the process, but the outcome, what you’re working towards, then that’s perfectly acceptable.

That’s a wonderful time for this discovery to take place.” “You have to do this for yourself.”

48:10 Peer group or no peer group “I believe that having your peers, having the other people that are going through the process with you, is healthy. That’s more camaraderie, more assurance that they’re on your side and they want to see you succeed as much as you do.”

49:14 “At least with your peers there you’re like, ‘They got my back.’ They’re going through this too.”

49:58 “And to me, working or not working is not whether or not you find this emotion, but what can you do with it now.”

50:30 Disclosure: knowledge is as frightening as ignorance

52:20 End

Ethan's First Interview

00:31 Ethan introduces himself

1:27 What is method acting

2:12 What distinguishes it from other acting philosophies, control

3:15 What is this thing she does, emotional warm up "It is, the best way that I can describe it is, you do vocal warm ups to warm up your voice and get it to where you've got your full range, you do physical warm ups to make sure you don't pull any muscles when you try to do the splits onstage, and you have emotional warm ups to make sure you don't emotionally harm yourself when you go in and try to do some... it's an emotional warm up is how I would describe it."

3:50 How it was introduced to him, describes steps & stages "Just standing and being in front of people, and not knowing what the hell was going on, basically. It was a disarming exercise, or it was intended to be. And then some key movements and phrases that were designed to connect you with some pretty strong emotions. Such as, "Go away" which, I guess, is to connect you with perhaps anger or frustration, and this is the movement that went along with it. And gradually you would, you would really connect to that and feel something."

5:08 What he knows about it

5:34 Describe the steps and stages "You have the instigator, or I guess the guide who gives you certain things to say and certain specific movements that go along with them to try to, I guess, isolate a particularly strong emotions. "I need" was one of them, with this movement. "Go away" was one of them that I remember, with that movement. I, which, of course, ideally would represent two different emotions. If you got a stronger response, I guess, with the "Go away," then you might pursue that for awhile and see where that takes you. And there's probably, I don't know, there's probably a bunch of key phrases that are supposed to elicit a specific response, or generally elicit a specific response. And then you, whichever gets the strongest response you pursue for awhile and see where that takes you."

6:53 What he expects to get out of the workshop, exercise, experience

7:44 Will it work better now, this time

8:32 Disclosure

9:15 Disclosure equals active role

9:55 What does it train you to do “It’s just an exercise to get you emotionally warmed up.”

10:25 “I think it’s one of those things, like a physical warm up. You go and you, you know, you stretch and you move around so you’re not sluggish onstage. Well, it’s the same thing with your emotions. You go through a range of emotions and then you’re more ready to deal with them.”

10:46 Do you use this process in miniature, emotional scales “I think it’s a concentrated form of doing emotional scales. You know, musically, you go through notes. Emotionally you go through angry, happy, sad, whatever happens to be the strongest at the time, you get that out of the way, and then you can move on to some other emotions.”

11:56 “It’s just a warm up, it’s an emotional warm up. So, yeah, you’re going, you try to go through certain emotions and- I think it’s a matter of getting in touch with whatever is the strongest emotion you’re feeling right then and sort of diluting the power of that.”

12:27 Workshop & solo use of the exercise

**13:05 How he’s used the exercise outside of the workshop setting, solo, a centering/focus exercise, technique

14:26 How directors can use it, what requirements are needed of them “As a director, I would imagine that it’s, it’s im- imagine, I would insist as an actor if you were my director and you wanted to do that on me, that you know what the hell you were doing.”

15:10 Emotions being distraction from play’s/character’s/theatre’s objectives “There’s more to what’s going on in a scene besides how a character’s supposed to be feeling. Obviously.

There’s things that move the plot forward that you have to concentrate on too. So, I don’t know, I guess the temptation is to start, especially with method actors, is to really, really

concentrate on the emotion and what the character is supposed to be feeling, rather than what's actually happening in the scene.”

15:45 Training & experience required, hazards

16:37 “So, yeah, I would, absolutely, if you wanted to gestalt somebody, I would absolutely want you to be well, well trained in something like that. Because, who knows what you can unleash? You would need to know to begin with, I think, whether or not you were working with a psychopath. Cause, I mean, let's say that you have somebody with some real emotional problems and you knew enough about Gestalting to get them into an exercise, but you didn't know enough about psychology to be able to identify this person as a potential risk in the first place. You've opened up yourself a whole can of worms there and you don't want a can worms.” “For control and safety's sake, worms are bad.”

17:33 Instructor's morals “Obviously you have to be of a high moral character, your intentions have to be the right ones. I imagine if your really good at it that there's probably there's a sense of power that goes with it. To be able to take somebody through emotions that they wouldn't be able to access immediately on their own, if you can do it successfully. And I think there's a temptation there to get carried away and do it, again cause you can do it and this person can't, you know. So, yeah, you obviously would have to have, your intentions would have to be in the right place.”

18:36 Trust between instructor & subject, intimacy & privacy, audience/ group setting “I think trust is important... There is a crowd dynamic that is extremely desirable in theatre. It's what makes theatre different from movies, or as good movies in its own way, is the energy that's exchanged between the audience and the actors onstage. And if you're doing intimacy and privacy that the pool of potential energy, I guess, is not as great to draw from and your results aren't going to be as good. I know I work better in front an audience. I mean, I just do. Even if something's going bad I'm still doing better in front of an audience than I would be, you know,

with one director sitting in the audience, you know, scrutinizing everything. 'Cause, you know, there's no response when there's just a couple of people... I think that the crowd is an important factor whenever your, and with an exercise like this when you want to, when you want to key into some strong emotions I think that the energy that's going to be there is sort of a feedback between you and whoever's watching is desirable."

20:00 Privacy, isolation "Yeah, in a very literal sense there's nobody to say, "Go away" to. But I don't, I think that a better way to say that is that there's nobody to say, "Go away" for. 'Cause, you're not saying, "Go away" to the people in the audience, as far as I know, I wasn't."

20:19 Who he was saying "go away" to, who others do "When I was saying, "Go away" I wasn't saying, "Go away" to the people in the audience. It was, "Go away", for me it was more of a sense of , sort of telling my self-consciousness to go away and to not be worried about, "Oh, here I am in front of a bunch of people." You know, that's what I was telling to go away, that thought that was in my head. "What are they thinking?" That's what I was telling to go away, not the actual people themselves."

2:50 Who other people may tell to, "Go away" "You know, if you do tap into something that's, you know, strong for you, you may be telling, you may be telling memory of your evil step-father who used to beat you to, "Go away." Who knows? But I don't think your necessarily telling who's watching to, "Go away.""

21:15 details remain confidential "Oh yeah, yeah, to a certain extent, yeah, confidential, the specifics are confidential, clearly. But it's not the specifics that you're really interested in."

21:30 Trust between subject and group "Because it is a, an informal kind of workshop environment you're not putting a finishing, a finished product in front of people. And so like a regular audience you just wouldn't want to be Gestalted in front of a regular audience because they're expecting something completely different and, you know, they're, if they don't get it

they're going to be disappointed. But people in a workshop environment, classroom environment, whatever, are, They'll be supportive of you. They're going to be going through the same thing as you are and they know what to expect from you. So, and you knowing that allows you to go ahead and give it your best shot."

22:30 your group wants to see you succeed "Sure, everybody would rather see something interesting happen than nothing, you know... I mean, if I'm going to sit through a workshop I want to see something happen. You know, let's see some results. Let's see some, you know, tears. Let's see some anger. Let's see some uncontrollable laughter. You know, rather than fear."

23:16 Feasibility of the exercise in professional, academic, public school, community theatre "Because I think that you probably have to be very well trained to be effective at it, I would say that the feasibility is extremely limited."

24:36 Academic theatre is the indigenous environment for this exercise "What it is an exploration. It's not a performance. You're just exploring, you know, where you can go with your, however you're feeling."

25:09 academic more so than professional theatre "A certain skill level if they're intending to pursue it further and a willingness to explore new things, obviously, or they wouldn't be, you know, trying to educate themselves in the first place." "In educational theatre, yeah, you're suppo-theoretically you're supposed to be open to anything. So, yeah, I think it's much more conducive to educational theatre than professional or community theatre."

25:45 Skill level required to be able to participate in the exercise "I think you have to be skilled enough to have the right attitude about it, to know why you're doing it. Which is just to explore what you can do."

26:09 The right attitude that the subject must have to participate in the exercise "Just to be open to new things. To want to find out, not necessarily what your limits are, but, or what your

boundaries are, but how much further you can stretch yourself. That's the attitude that I think is important to it. And, yeah, you know, it might hurt a little bit. It might be the funnest thing you ever did, but you don't know. But, the attitude is that you have to be willing to take risks to get better."

26:56 Disclosure: this time vs. last time

28:00 He'll be more open to it now

28:22 More of an active role, more aware

29:00 Potential hazards "If you are not well trained enough to recognize a problem, a person with emotional problems to begin with, you're going to have a hell of a time on your hands. It's important, and for me, this is why it's important for me to know something about it, because it's important for the subject to be willing to do it. And if you get somebody up there who has no idea that they're about to go through an emotional rollercoaster ride, or what is intended to be an emotional exploration, then, yeah, bad things can happen. They're not going to trust you after that, maybe, if they're, you know, really emotionally guarded person. People have different acting preferences. There are people out there with really presentational styles. And, there's clearly a place for that." "If that's not the kind of thing that you're into, you know, really exploring emotions, then you're not going to want to do it. If you get suckered into doing it then you're not going to anything else that the guide tries to teach you after that. So that's a hazard."

30:32 More about disclosure, trust "If you had no idea what it was, but you trusted the person who was going to gestalt you very, very well, and they just kind of came out of nowhere with it, and you were willing to go along with whatever it was that they were going to do, because you trusted them, then, yeah, it might be interesting to see what happens. But that's, really, that's not total ignorance. I mean, you know that this person is not going to take you further than you can handle."

31:30 The constructive use of emotions “Some people can use their emotions constructively with exercises like this. Some people don’t need it at all. Some people are emotionally close and they’re ready to go onstage and cry at the drop of a hat and really, you know, feel, more or less, what they supposed to be feeling. You know, it’s just different kinds of people. Some people need an extra push to get full use of their abilities.”

32:55 More about the constructive use of emotions “Yeah, I think some people are able to do that. And I think the more often, let’s say that you are the type of person that really needs to, to really warm into something before you really start to feel it at all. I guess the more often that you did more exercises of this nature, which is just to say emoti- exercises designed to access your emotions and warm them up, then yeah, you could use them constructively. **But, I mean, if you feeling like you’re having to rip your heart out everytime, then it’s probably, it’s probably not worth it.”

33:43 The exercise can train an actor

34:25 Crying lessons, what you feel during the process “Crying lessons, yeah, well that’s where allot of people end up, or where allot of people start out. The first thing that you’re usually feeling is, well, some nervousness, ‘cause you’re standing in front of people, at least we were standing in front of a big group of people. And you know what they’re thinking. You know what you were thinking when they were standing in front of you. And so, that, yeah, that makes you a little bit, that makes you that much more nervous. But, you know, the idea is to work through the pure, the anxiety of it, and to get to whatever feeling is closest to the surface, then move past that and find another one, and another one, and so on.”

35:14 “Like musical scales, I guess. I kind of like that. I’m going to use that one. Musical scales. Scales. Is that what they’re called? That’s what I thought. Not like justice scales, but musical scales.”

35:57 People who don't like method acting, some actors allow themselves to be distracted by emotions from more important objectives "Yeah, I can see why people would say stuff like that... Some of them, yeah. Some of them are people that just don't like to deal with their own emotions and the idea of working that hard for something that you can fake, I guess, is repulsive to them."

38:30 Misconceptions due to misuse of method acting "I think the most notorious examples of method acting are the ones that people remember and so, that's what they identify with as method acting, "Method actors go nuts and do all kinds of crazy stuff like stay up all night."

39:45 Safety and control "I think that control's extremely important and I'm willing to fool myself to a certain extent, but I always want to be, you know, in control, as an actor, I always want to be in control. I don't want to get so into a scene that I feel like breaking a prop that might be necessary in the next scene, without thinking about it. You know, that kind of thing. And there's all kinds of things like that that can happen."

40:40 Hello little Johanne, Ethan Jr.

41:10 Refined use of skill is control, how does the exercise facilitate that "Just to get you used to feeling strong emotions, I guess, is the only way that it can really be, well not the only way, but, I guess, the primary way that it's constructive is you get used to taking yourself to emotionally powerful places then you can get there quicker and more effectively, and safer."

41:40 Emotional practice "It's emotional practice is what it is in it's, you know, basic sense. In it's basic sense you're practicing feeling emotions. And the more you practice the better you're going to be at it."

42:39 Gestalt exercises are emotional practice "To me Gestalt exercises are just plain and simple emotional practice. Like and emotional warm up, you're taking yourself through, or, you're not taking yourself, you're being lead through, theoretically various emotions. The first and foremost is whatever's the strongest emotion that you're feeling right then and there. And

you go with that for awhile until it loses its, I guess, potency. And then you can move on and try to move on to other emotions and other emotions. You just get your emotional center warmed up until you're, I guess you're never really, I guess 'comfortable' is a bad word, but familiar with the steps that it takes to get you to a certain, to a certain point emotionally. If you need to get yourself really, really worked up, well, you'll know how to do it. Or you'll have an idea. If it works once then you know, at least you know that you can get there."

43:52 "And you get there once at least you know that you can do it, that you can be lead to or, and eventually lead yourself to, the strong emotions that your trying to present onstage."

44:19 End

Ethan's Second Interview

00:30 Ethan introduces himself

00:48 Ethan introduces himself

1:22 What is method acting

2:02 What distinguishes it from other acting styles "The idea that you actually have to feel whatever it is your character is feeling, is to me, the distinguishing characteristic of method acting, as opposed to other styles of acting. Rather than pretending to feel something, you want to convince yourself that you actually feel this way, that the character is supposed to feel."

2:57 Personal commitment, more required in method "I guess it does boil down to a higher level of personal commitment, maybe not personal commitment, maybe personal involvement. You can be just as committed to getting something right or to be a convincing actor without being a method actor, but there's more personally at stake, there's a greater risk of hurting yourself emotionally when you become involved in method acting. Some people think that makes it more noble. I'm undecided on the subject, myself.

3:40 What is this thing she does “The thing that Dr. Vincent does is, I guess we’re talking about the Gestalting, is an interesting little exercise where she gets you on your feet in front of everybody and has you say little things, little phrases, and do little motions to try to trigger an emotional response in you.”

4:07 Why, warmed up emotionally, emotional stretching, scales “Why she does this seems to be, my understanding is to get you warmed up emotionally. As an actor you’re moving around onstage, you’re speaking, and you’re supposed to be feeling emotions, particularly if you are a method actor. So, for the movement you do physical warm ups, such as stretching, things like that, exercise, just to get the blood, you know, flowing. For your voice you do vocal warm ups, maybe some singing exercises, and you sort of go through your scales vocally. And emotionally, this gestalt thing that she does is sort of, it’s to warm up your emotions and sort of an emotional stretching or an emotional scales. It compares that way in a- It compares to the stretching in a physical sense and the scales in a vocal sense. It’s just to warm up your emotions, a warm up exercise.”

5:13 Is the gestalt an extension of method acting “A loose extension of method acting is what I’d call this exercise.” “To call it an extension of method acting is sort of putting it out of its place. I think it’s an extension of psychology. But it can be added to method act- a supplement, let’s call it, to method acting, rather than an extension of.”

5:58 Steps and stages of the exercise “What Dr. Vincent is going to do, if she does it the same way that she did it before, is she’ll take a single person, let’s say me, and she’ll stand me up, get me on my feet, actually on my feet in front of whoever’s there-”

6:59 Steps and stages of the exercise “What I think she’s going to do, what Dr. Vincent is going to do is, and I’ll use myself as an example, is she’ll get me up on my feet, actually standing up in front of people, whoever’s there, she won’t ask anyone to leave the room or anything like that. I think that may be an important part of the exercise is to actually be in front of people feeling

your emotions. She'll have me stand perfectly still, you know, not frozen but, just, you know still, centered, which just sort of means prepared and ready to do whatever it is I'm supposed to do. Focused. And she'll ask me to probably say a short phrase such as, "Go away." Along with that phrase, she'll ask me to, and she'll, what she usually does is she demonstrates it. She'll say the phrase that she wants you to say and she'll do a short, little movement along with the phrase that she wants you to do. When she did, "Go away" she would do a hand motion. So it'd be like, "Go away." And then she'll look at you and that's your cue to do that, "Go away." And whatever, you know, emotional response accompanies that or begins to accompany that, or starts to come out as you repeat this motions and phrase over and over again may trigger something else that she wants to pursue, a different phrase depending on which way you're feeling. Some of the other phrases that I remember are, "I need." So, you know, if it looks like you're feeling a little scared or something. And that's what's primarily coming out in your first initial motion and phrase, she'll change it up to something else to try to really focus in on whatever emotion seems to be closest to the surface. And for, "I need," I remember, there was sort of a clutching, grabbing movement to go along with that. And she'll keep you going until you eventually work through whatever the primary emotion is that you're feeling and get to a different emotion. And you may end up crying, you may end up laughing hysterically. You may be completely resistant to it and not do anything. Or you may be perfectly relaxed and perfectly comfortable and all of these are valid responses."

9:30 What happens to the emotions you harvest in the exercise "You harvest. That's an interesting word. Emotional harvest."

10:30 What the exercise shows you "I guess what happens is, you have a better idea of how to get from one emotion to another, as an actor, and maybe how long it's going to take you make that transition. So that when you go back and work your scene and use these feelings that

you've warmed up you have a better idea for that. It's more a matter, I think, of timing and understanding and familiarity with the emotions that you're supposed to employ."

11:36 How it was introduced to him "Here's this gung-ho acting teacher and she's just ready to show us everything."

12:32 How it was introduced to him "She would stop what we were doing and get one of the participants in the scene, one of the actors, and stand them up and have us all watch." 13:15 "So, somebody's up there, all by themselves, standing, and we're all looking at them, you know, and she says, "Go away."

14:17 When he first did it

16:02 What he expects to get out of the workshop

17:52 Disclosure

21:00 Knowledge can be as scary as ignorance

22:15 He was more willing to do the exercise, having been last in the class

23:00 He'll do better this time

23:57 People who were resistant to this method in the class

24:45 How actors can use this technique as an exercise "As an exercise, as one of many processes to make a scene better."

25:37 How actors can use the exercise. "It's the same thing with the Gestalt technique. If you want to, if you want to have your, if you want to be more familiar with what it's going to take to get you to feel a strong emotion, or get you to identify with a strong emotion that your character it supposed to feel you do the gestalt exercise. And if, you know, it works for you, and I'm not sure that it's the type of exercise that works for everybody, but if it works for you it's just, it's an exercise that you do just to make your emotions more flexible. I guess, make you more flexible as an actor."

26:20 It just a tool, neither good or bad, how it's used, & people who view stuff like this in poor light "A tool, in itself, is not good or bad, it's how you use it. You can use a hammer to kill somebody or you can use a hammer to build a house for the homeless. But, either way, it's a tool. It's the same way with this technique. If you were sort of a malicious person who enjoyed having power over people, yeah, you could get them up in front of people and make them wither and cry. And, great, you've misused the tool. Or, if you're somebody who's interested in making somebody a better actor you can get them up there and show them how to guide themselves, not necessarily through the same process, but, you know, guide them from one emotion to another. It just depends on how you use it. There are people out there who I guess would say it's wrong to manipulate people in an emotional sense. Well, that's fine. It's fine for you to believe that. There are other people out there, like me, who are willing to be, to do whatever it is that they are supposed to do to make themselves better, provided, you know, within reason. To me it is not unreasonable to risk feeling uncomfortable in front of people so that you will know how to get in touch with the emotional energy that it is going to take to have really good performance."

27:50 the active subject

29:00 Would work passively, aggressively

29:29 How teachers and directors could use it "You can use an exercise like this, the gestalt exercise, if you're a director or a teacher, to demonstrate that, yes, you really can, as an actor, get in touch with your own emotions and bring those to the character. I'm sure there's a lot of people out there who'd think, "There's no way I would ever feel the way this character feels about whatever's going on onstage. So I just can't do it. I might as well not even try." You know, as a teacher, like a college professor, you know, if your goal is to show that, "Yes, you can bring that emotion onstage and to your character. It just takes a little bit of work." That's what directors and teacher can use it for."

30:37 How he has used it

32:51 She doesn't believe that actors could do it to themselves

33:50 How feasible its use is in professional, academic, public school, community theatre "In professional theatre you're supposed to already know what you're doing as an actor." "I think, as a professional, you should, sort of, already be past that."

34:59 "I think that the main place for it is educational theatre. For instance, when we did shows, even when we did the college shows, we didn't do that during rehearsal process, for any of the shows Dr. Vincent directed. We only did that in classroom situation."

35:22 "But it was always in the clinical environment of the classroom that we used gestalt techniques. So, I think that that's really where it has to stay. And only for serious students."

35:46 "Most of the people in a college theatre class are committed to theatre and are going to be trustworthy in that sense. That they're going to understand why you would choose to gestalt somebody or be Gestalted."

38:25 What attitude should an actor take toward the exercise "I think the most important attitude that you can have toward this technique, and, really, any technique, is, well, you have to respect it and use caution. When you're dealing with people's emotion it's a nebulous kind of thing."

39:11 "So any time you're using an exercise that gets emotions involved you really have to be careful with it. That, to me, is the overriding sense that I would take into any situation where a gestalt technique might be used. It's just respect for the person and process involved and being careful."

39:54 Trust, intent of the exercise "Trust is probably, trust is obviously a very important factor. I don't think you have to be on intimate terms with whoever is in the audience around you but you'd better trust whoever is guiding you through the exercise or you're going to be resistant. You may be resistant anyway, but you're going to be that much more resistant if you don't trust

whoever is guiding you through a gestalt exercise. You have to know that their intent is not to have power over you, to manipulate you into doing things. The intent is to show you what you yourself have available to use. And if you understand that as an actor you're going to be that much more willing to try it and probably that much more successful. Trust is extremely important."

41:15 Hazards, his concerns about the exercise "I do have some concerns about the technique. I think it is extremely, extremely important to be trained if you're going to try something like this. It's not, and in that sense, it's not a practical technique to use in theatre because it does deal with psychology and it does deal with emotions and in order to be effective and not dangerous in using tools like that, you really have to know what you're doing. It's, you know, the difference between a hand saw and a power saw, I guess. If you, you know, you just, that much more important that you know what you're doing. When you're dealing with a subject like emotions where nobody really knows all the answers. So, yeah, it's, some of the, you could get somebody who's completely emotionally unstable, you could get somebody with real psychological problems as a subject if you're not, if you, and if you didn't know enough to be able to recognize that things were going to far it could get dangerous for the person involved and for yourself if you're the guide, if you're actually running the gestalt exercise. I mean, think about it. How much would it take to push a schizophrenic right over the edge? But, how do you recognize that sort of thing? So, in that sense it's not a practical thing to use. It's important, important, important, I think, to be well trained."

42:58 "And, probably it's a good idea to know your subject, yes. Because, or at least to be able to recognize certain characteristics about your subject. But, the better you know your subject, the more they're going to trust you, probably. Unless you're just a jerk and the better they know you the more they hate you. In which case you got no business doing it anyway."

43:21 “That’s also true, yeah. You could probably push buttons more effectively, emotionally, if you know somebody better.”

43:35 Constructive use of emotions “Method acting in general and gestalt in particular is constructive use of emotions? Sure. Yeah. I think method acting is fine. I am sort of a method actor. I think it is more important to understand how the character is supposed to be feeling than it is to actually be feeling what the character is supposed to be feeling. Because it’s not real life. I mean, you can’t completely recreate whatever it is that the character is supposed to be feeling onstage...”

44:40 “And so, method acting, to me, has always been problematic in that sense. But it is important, I think, to be able to understand what your character is feeling and to be able bring some of what you’ve gone through, the actor, or what you understand into the role. I think that’s very important. But I don’t know that that’s all the way method acting. But it is, to me, a constructive use of emotions, particularly if you’re a very emotional person and you just have access to your emotions better than some people do. Method acting is a great way to put that to use. Better than, like, baby-sitting would be. You know, wouldn’t want to scare the kids with your emotional sensitivity. So, yeah, to me, method acting and gestalt work, I guess, in general, is, or, in particular, is a constructive use.”

46:16 It could all be a distraction from more important objectives, control “You do run the risk of focusing too much on exactly the kind of grief that your character is supposed to be feeling. You know, it could become distracting. It could become a scene about crying, rather than a scene about moving on, or a scene about, you know, making a connection to somebody else, or a scene about understanding what is to lose somebody. And control is the key factor there. To me it’s very important to maintain control as an actor onstage, on camera, whatever. You have to have control of the situation. Because it is a constructed situation and there are certain goals that the play has to get across. And if something breaks down you got to be able to pick up and

make sure that these objectives get accomplished. And if that means skipping a couple of lines where your character yells and screams so that you can go and make sure that this flat over here doesn't fall. Yeah, it is, to me, objectives are more important than emotions. And that may make me less of a method actor than some people. But, to me, control is the most important issue."

48:05 "Yeah, people came to see the play, the action. The story, in a lot of cases, people are more concerned with the plot then they are concerned with the specific characters. Character work is great but not all that successful." "It's interesting, but only to a certain extent. There has to be more to it than that. It is, in fact, you know, it's supposed to be condensed and saturated experience, so it can't be completely real."

49:33 Crying lessons "I can see why it would be refereed to as crying lessons. I think it's more indicative of people in general than it is of the exercise itself. I think what the exercise does is get you in touch with whatever emotion you're trying to keep below surface. And, for most people, the least acceptable emotion to be feeling in front of people is, well, the least acceptable thing to do in front of people is cry. Maybe farting is worse, I don't know, defecating, something. The thing you try not to do the hardest, you'll yell in front of people if somebody makes you mad, and you'll laugh in front of people if somebody makes you happy. But, if somebody makes you sad, if somebody hurts you, if you're feeling hurt, you know, that makes you feel that much more vulnerable and you don't want people to know that, for the most part. It's sort of incidental that that's probably the most common suppressed emotion. So that when you do this emotional warm up, that's generally what's going to happen. Yeah, I can see why it would be called crying lessons, but I don't think that that's entirely accurate."

51:45 End

Dr. V's Interview, Part One, Camera Right

00:29 Dr.V introduces herself

1:50 What is method acting "The body inspires the spirit and the emotions. And that the creation of acting should be through a method of physical actions, that you could trust the body to elicit emotions and feelings." "In a nutshell it is the method of physical actions."

3:15 How method is related to emotions, emotions follow the body, a cycle "Emotions follow the body. A physical act follows the body. So that , indeed, if I ask you to stamp your feet long enough and to thrust your fists at me, the very act physically of that stirs something within us emotionally." "The body inspires the emotions. And we know now that it is a cycle that you go through. That if you physically begin something then your spirit or emotions follow then the emotions begin to knock on the door back to the body. So you get into this, what we call, "The Rut."

4:49 What the popular perception of method is today, the myths "Method acting, how we view method acting comes from several camps. In this country today there's many methodologies that are studies and actors are quick to jump and so, "Oh, I'm Eisner." Or, "Oh, I'm Method." Or, whatever." "Seeing that the method has been around for such a long time it has a mystique, and it has history, and it has myths. And those who have not studied it by into the myth. And it has some pretty important people in the field who have promoted the myth." "I think we've all heard the myth of, "Oh, method acting, that's where you sit in a corner and cry all the time." Or, all of a sudden you lose your ego or your personality and you turn into this person. That you go insane. Or, also, method actors are people that just sit onstage are also are very self-indulgent in their own emotions or their tears or they're crying and that they're not interested in the audience whatsoever. This is just for me. Thus, you sometimes can't hear them, or they're doing their own, they're giving their own body to a character and there's no tempo or rhythm at all. That all the technical aspect of a play are given up. And I think that primarily the way that all of this myth

began is through some of these very important people.” “These are the myths. And they go on and on and on. In actuality, none of that is truth. I think that most of that is the business of publicists.”

9:22 What is the single most distinguishing characteristic that separates method acting from other styles, philosophies, theories of acting “It’s my believe that all of the methodologies other than method have stolen from method. You can see, It’s sort of the grand-daddy.” “And that’s not to say they haven’t refined the vocabulary and that they haven’t found, maybe, new ways of expressing an old idea. In essence, I think what method gets closer to is the understanding that there is an inner life, there is an inner world for the actor. It is not totally the whole ball of wax, the methodology, the technique that has to be explored for the actor. But it has great respect for it.” “You see the respect. You see the tradition. You see the history. And you see respect for the inner life and inner emotions and inner truth that I sometimes think in the other methodologies is skimmed a bit.”

10:55 Is the method less stylized, addressing the technique, logistics (inside out vs. outside in) “You know, method actors, No one ever said that when you study method acting that you don’t have to address technique. And what I mean by technique, you have be heard. It is the business of the actor and director to be seen and heard onstage. You have to. We have an audience. You have to address the needs of the character. Age. Given circumstances. Health. Weather. Whatever. You also have to address tempos and rhythms of scenes; climax, denumon. All of that is addressed. In comedy, where method is used also, you know, there’s such a thing as comic timing, set up and delivery. All of it. You know, method acting still has to address what I call the technique, the outer elements. But it’s also interested in developing an inner life for the character and an inner truth. And in that sense, when we use the style word it’s always a, has, is a little dubious here, but it address, I believe, both sides, an inner and an outer working, if you will. Many actors say, “I prefer to work from the inside out.” And then there are other actors

that like to say, “I like to work from the outside in. I like to get the body going first and the mask of the character, and that will affect my emotions.” Sometimes I think the method work, for the majority of actors that I have worked with, helps them to create very different characters from project to project. It works organically. It works from the inside. And it also allows the actor to bring more of themselves to the character. And, thus, I believe, enabling a more realistic and also a feeling performance.”

13:00 Method vs. other techniques “I’m talking about the difference between the method work and other techniques. I hope I’m not sounding like I’m blasting the other ones, because I’m not.” “And I steal from everybody that I can that’s good.”

14:13 What the actor brings (personally, emotionally) to the character, employing themselves in the role, the use of self “I think it’s use of self. I think that, bottom line, method acting, to me and to my students and to my colleagues that I’ve worked professionally with, there’s a sense of satisfaction for the artist to be able to employ themselves, their life histories, their, what they’ve experienced, what they’ve learned, their pains, their gains, and their feelings about life and experiences and their passions. And being able to utilize that, being able, just like a visual artist to use different colors, the actor has the ability then to employ different emotions, different life experiences. And having, and this is where the gestalt work comes in, the courage and the strength and the wisdom to be able to use themselves to use of themselves. And I think it’s very clear, not only to the laymen but to the professional, when you’re watching performances... you can see the use of self. You can see the soul that’s working there. You can see that they’re employing a great deal of themselves. Whereas, sometimes, I think, in other methodologies, not in all of them, but, in some, you don’t get the depth of performance. And it’s simply because the actor is not willing to really us their fears, their hurts, their joys, their wonderful remembrances as a child. It gets too, what we call, “Close to home” for them so they move away from that. And what happens is that, you know, and I’ll clarify this now, you get an actor that has been

‘performing’ emotions or ‘mimicking’ the performance, ‘mimicking’ the situation, as opposed to really feeling it and really giving life to the character. So then we have what I differentiate the difference between ‘acting’ and ‘performing’.”

16:25 What is this thing you do “What is this madness? Gestalt work for the actor is, in it’s best terms, an avenue and a technique for the actor to be able to explore their emotional life. It also incorporates a lot of benefits out of that. The gestalt work helps the actor to understand how just being onstage impacts him or her. Just being onstage without a character at all. What the impact is of being on the stage as a human being, what that’s about. The work also then helps the actor to understand their range of emotions, and in understanding what masks they have developed to be able to cope with being onstage and in life. How the masks that we use, and to define mask: many people use the mask of their profession to face the world, “I’m a professor.” Or, you know, “I’m an artist.” Or, whatever, that’s a mask. Sometimes people face the world with humor. You’d like to get to know this person but you don’t know them because there’s so many jokes coming at you. And you see those masks with kids as class clowns, or the cut up, or, whatever. Or, perhaps you’ve seen another mask of the person who’s always kvetching and always upset, there’s always something wrong, they’re always needing sympathy. These are masks. This is how we cope with the world or how we present ourselves to the world. And the more complicated and creative the human being, the more masks.”

18:40 “So the work helps them so see who they are and the masks that they’re using. It also gives them a safe space to be able to explore then without the mask. Just to see who they are. And to identify, also, their weaknesses and their strengths. Their will be some emotions that are outside of their comfort zone, that they’re asked to deal with and to explore. And there are some that they already know and can and it’s a celebration. It also empowers, I think, the performer to realize that the audience is not a judgmental body. That the audience is there to enjoy them and to share with them and that they’re a support group. There are allot of long term

benefits out of it too. Basically, one of the mottoes or the icons of gestalt work is, and I quote from Perls, "That the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

20:00 bodies, voices, & all sorts of training, but no help for emotions "And in this country, and in training institutions, and in conservatories, in university we have done so much work since Stanislavsky came around and then the method was developed. And we develop and we work on actor's voices and their bodies and their script and their improvisation and film techniques and style technique but no one goes near the inner life, or the psychology, or their own spirit, or the emotional work. It's taboo. And that's part of the taboo too with the method work is because it too knocks on that door. In this country for many years it just became in the 80's and 90's fashionable to have a therapist. Prior to that if you say that you were seeing someone it was horrifying, there's something wrong with you. And I think that that kind of bias bled over into acting work and in training. And so we never discussed that. And actors were just bullied. All of a sudden they would read in a script, you know, "Ophelia enters distracted." Well, if you're an actress who doesn't understand this, how do you do this? And unless you had a very avant guard director who would take you through exercises or so forth, the actor was left with their own devices. You just simply did not go there. So, the work, in a very safe way, it does not get into the personal lives or the histories or trying to analyze an actor whatsoever. But it provides a way in a safe space in which the actor can explore how to enter distracted. How to have great anger without, you know, a parent or a sibling or whatever reprimanding them for it. And, conversely, how do you bring great joy to a character, or great fun, or ajuadeveve... how would you touch on something within yourself to get to that kind of estaticness? So there's a range of human emotion. But we, in the past, like, as I said, in the 70's and 80's have walked away from that. I believe that this work empowers the actor and gives a safe space to be able to work on those particular needs and to employ them then in their work."

22:45 How it (Gestalt Work for Actors) was introduced to her “The first time I saw gestalt work was in my MFA at Southern Methodist University in the late 70’s. My acting professor at the time was working professionally and had come from New York. Her background had been at the neighborhood playhouse and she had been studying with, privately with several teachers through the method in New York and brought the work to us. And we were in our first year of graduate acting courses there. What amazed me about the work was that I was coming from a BFA program in Dance. And that the work was so physical. It really was, is a non-verbal type of work. And thus, I began to instantaneously to realize that it was working subconsciously. Not on the conscious, but on the subconscious. And I was fascinated in how, from a dancer’s point of view, and also from a movement point of view, and from an actor point of view, how the two worlds were coming together for me. And I could see what it was that she was doing with each of my classmates. I studied with her for a year, and watched, and I was Gestalted twice. And then watched my classmates in the work for a year, and saw incredible differences in our ability to flesh out characters. And, also, I thought, a sense of wisdom that occurred for all of us, in that we were emotionally much more mature, wise. And we had this sense of knowing and understanding ourselves. All of a sudden the work gave us a sense of strength and maturity. And, almost as if our emotions were a tool for us now. Just like our bodies, just like our voices, these were the canvases, the tools that actors use. And all of a sudden it wasn’t sort of a wishy-washy, ambivalent thing that we were working with. That our emotional lives were tools that we could explore and use and give to characters.”

25:22 Thoroughly explain the procedure, 4 parts “The procedure is in four parts. To begin with, the professor asks the student to stand on the stage by themselves and to just, to see what happens. Also I ask that, I have the students or the audience sit in the front row and close. And the first part is literally to address how the student feels onstage without a character, without costumes, lights, anything. Just how it impacts them and just to stand there. That is the

introduction. And also they acknowledge the audience. They see them. They look at them. And they experience what happens with them, and a variety of things do. This is where we begin to the masks appear, of, “How do I stand here naked in front of people. What are my natural reactions?” And just go through them and explore what happens to them.”

26:24 “The second part. We begin to work with the emotions that come out. And because you’re standing there and dealing with that, obviously, emotions begins to move the body. So, the second half of it is to begin to explore what it is that the actor is feeling and to allow that. What we don’t realize in everyday life, pedestrian life, is that emotions come up all the time and we squash them, we push them down. In that situation, in the second part of this, we allow them to come up. And it’s done in several ways. It’s done physically, and it’s done through word association that I will give the person. And then we explore it. We explore then a range of emotions, from being mad to anger to joy to love to need, and also at the same time becoming vulnerable and becoming alright with that.”

27:21 “After we’ve explored that, the third part is to be able then to put the emotion, to put the feelings, to put this spontaneity into work. So, the third part is with a monologue I ask the actor to put the work into a monologue and to experience what it’s like to actually be feeling things while you are speaking. And this is the crux at which we, the actor usually discovers the difference between ‘acting’ and ‘performing’. And they realize that in this sense they’re really acting. They’re really using themselves.”

27:52 “The fourth part is what I call the validation. This is when the work is over with and I ask the student to sit on the stage and sit down and I sit with them and to ask them then to relook at their classmates, their audience that is sitting out their. And then we talk about the experience that they had. I ask them not to share what imagery came up or what they saw or problems in their life. I just want to know what the feeling was like in the moment, what they experienced in the moment. What were their fears, what were their joys, what was fun, what they discovered.

And then, the most important part, is that I ask each audience member to talk back to the person and say, “This is what I saw you do. This is what I know about you.” And this is the part at which we have a validation of audience becoming supportive to the actor and not judgmental to the actor. Those are the four parts.”

29:00 The canvas of the body, touching to release memory “The body is a canvas for the emotions. There are psychologists that say that your entire life history is imprinted upon your body. That you can touch several, or different places and there is memory. I think that Rolphers will tell you, and Rolphing is a type of physical deep massage that works through problem areas in the body and facia tissue, and in that work they will tell you that when they’re working on someone that the person with whom that they are working will begin to have memories associated with different parts of the body. With hands, face, or stomach, or soforth. When you’re doing this work also with the emotions when you’re standing, as I call, “Totally vulnerable” onstage by yourself, and you begin to do the work you begin to see that the body begins to respond in different ways. Stagefright is one of the best examples of the body responding. Some people get very sweaty palms, or their stomach hurts, or their mouth becomes very dry. Is a physical response to it. And you can also see injuries that people have had. Perhaps athletes, they favor a knee or not a knee, or when they get nervous the begin to pop it. The popping of knuckles is the same way. And what we like to say is that emotion and memory lies within those areas. And that if we begin to work on those areas that it does trigger emotion and sometimes that is when a block will disappear, an emotional block. Or, sometimes that’s, you know, your protection against the world is there with it. I think that, in a very pedestrian manner, for exempla, people know that memory lies within their body.”

31:25 “We create emotional memory. And we also place these memories in different parts of purge bodies. And, again, this is a wonderful tool for an actor to be able to get to a feeling or to get back to a memory and soforth.”

32:15 “That our senses in our body, and what we see, smell, touch, and feel is the way to memory. And memory then is the way to feeling. And feeling is the way to an Academy Award.”

32:40 Full circle, inside to outside then outside to inside “And this is what’s lovely, then the actor doesn’t have to push or perform it becomes like being on a rollercoaster ride. Once you can get either the inside going for you, memories or the thoughts, then the body can respond. And if the body responds usually it begins working on the emotions. So, you can’t lose, if you can get in.”

33:05 Emotional blocks, training emotional muscles, control “And the gestalt work helps to break down, perhaps, the blocks in the body that are preventing us from experiencing those emotions again, or experiencing those joys again, or, perhaps, just validating the fact that we can do it. It’s almost like taking an athlete back into training. You know, you can run like this. You just have to start slowly, and in a safe spot, do your correct warm ups, eat the right food, and begin moving, and in this manner, then you can run a mile. And it’s the same thing emotionally. You know, our emotions are nothing more than muscles. They have to be toned and trained and exercised and allowed to breath. And then as responsible people we begin to understand how to use those. emotions responsibly. And also how they work. And how to employ them.”

34:01 “One of the myths again from method actors is that they’ll, you know, they’ll be out of control. And sometimes that’s the same myth with the gestalt work. Of, “Once these emotions start, aren’t they just going to flood you?” Or “Are they going to go out of control?” Or, whatever. It’s just the opposite. If you have the ability to exercise these muscles to express your emotions you know your limits. You know what you can and cannot do. And in the long run it produces an actor that is, I think, very mature, wise, selective, and empathic, not only to himself or herself but to humanity. They understand how to use and develop their emotions.”

34:54 Empowerment: the strength to be vulnerable “It sounds like an oxymoron, doesn’t it?

‘The strength to be vulnerable.’ It’s an oxymoron, but it’s the truth. Again, emotions are muscles that in this society we don’t use. And we begin to fear it from the times we’re really small.

“Boys don’t cry.” “Girls are quiet.” “Sit down.” And then your peers begin to work on you in your teenage years. What’s cool. You know, how to talk. How to dress. How to walk. What to think. How to look bored. How to be all of these things. There’s an amazing box that human beings, and in particular actors, get put into. And then you walk into a career that says, “OK, on take two, hit your mark and cry.” “But, I’ve been practicing all these years how not to.”

Right? Or, how to laugh hysterically on take three. So, in this sense the gestalt work helps the actor to get to it. And also, it takes an amount of strength, I think, to show an audience that side of yourself. Or, in another sense, to give these emotions to a character. To give vulnerability, emotional vulnerability to a character puts you on the line, opens you up. And that’s very frightening to people. To become emotionally vulnerable.”

36:54 “It’s the same thing with emotions one you have worked with your own then there’s a kind of confidence that happens, a strength that happens. You know that once we’re through this take, or once we’re through this run, or once, you know, I pull off my makeup it’s over, it’s done. When I come back I begin to work into this character’s needs. So, as I say, it’s developing a knowledge and a confidence, and it’s the confidence there. If you don’t have the opportunity to express these things then you’re not going to be able to do them as an actor. It’s too frightening.”

38:27 The ambush technique: the universal emotive words and phrases “The ambush technique. There are certain words. Words are powerful. Words bring up imagery. Words knock on the door of our emotions. More importantly, they knock on the door of your subconscious. This work does not deal, it works through the conscious mind to the subconscious mind. And the words are chosen very carefully. Such words as, “I need.” And they’re always open ended. A

key phrase is, "I need." Another one is, "Go away." "I like you." "I love you." "I hate you." Sometimes, depending upon where the actor, and those are the basics, and that's sort of the testing waters for me to be able to see where we are going to day. The words elicit an emotion and a thought. Sometimes it's just pure emotion and they don't see an incident or a person in their brain. And that's fine. That's what we want. And sometimes they do. Sometimes they do see someone or an incident they, not quite resolved yet, not quite, you know, or are frightened of. Or, sometimes, it's one that's hysterically funny. Or a very young emotion. Who knows? But, nonetheless the actor is going into the subconscious, they are going into the world of feeling and thinking, what I say, they are going into a Jung space, that deals in the subconscious of imagery of thoughts of smells, anything that will elicit the emotion. This is what we're dealing with. Also the words, I think."

45:46 End

Dr.V's Interview, Part Two, Camera Right

00:30 The universal emotive words and phrases "Again, you're dealing with, the words are polar, or bi-polar, if you will, but the "I need" gesture is usually done with hands outward. The student is standing with hands outward and feet forward, what we call, in a neutral position. As much as we can, in a neutral mask. With the hands outward, asking, "I need." This is a very vulnerable state to be in. With hands open, this part of the body exposed, and the chest open and exposed. The vital organs all open and in a neutral mask. Because, usually when you're watching people you will see most kinds of a physical covering up. Like this, or this, this. And this is a type of masking that happens. And to just be able to stand onstage and be still and to do this and then to say, "I need" takes allot of guts to do. It also elicits emotions. Conversely, to push away, to make the body, this part of the body to push away and say, "Go away." And

sometimes to be asked to stamp a foot, one foot or the other, elicits those emotions to jar also. And so you're dealing with a broad spectrum from one to ten. Meaning total vulnerability that you're dealing with from one to five, and then this very closed pushing away. You're asking people to come into to you and then at the same time you're asking it to go away from you. Those are two very large, it seems very small here, but once you're onstage by yourself and in front of ten colleagues it presents you not only with these demons but your own inner demons and your inner joys too. So, it's bi-polar, and that's the reasoning for it. The words too are weighted. The words that we talk about, "I need." And it's open-ended. The person within their own mind fills in whatever it is. And sometimes, oddly enough, in the midst, when we really get going with this, sometimes they won't even realize it, they'll put, a word will pop out. Or a name will pop out."

3:32 "And the "Go away" stuff elicits all kinds of imagery too and feeling, and, also, the empowerment being able to push all what is not needed away from them. So, you see, there is the empowerment: is that they can ask and either get it or not get it, and also that they can push it away. And that they have the ability to do that and no one is going to tell them any difference or not to, which is very empowering, I think, nothing happens."

4:16 "No one talks back. It's fabulous because no one talks back. You win. You are in a win situation. You are in a safe situation. You are in a win situation. You have the first and the last word."

4:35 Frustration "Frustration is a part of it. It's not an instant fix. The frustration will happen. Particularly when you begin to see, and sometimes when you begin to see an old ghost. And the old ghost may not be a face, it may not be a person, it may not be, necessarily, a situation or a memory. It can just be this agitation. But you know of it. You know the feeling from some place. It's, you're trying to work through and you can't. And it could be, just simply, trying to express something. It's the same feelings that we get when we, sometimes, we get in situations

where we can't say the correct words, or we can't express ourselves well, or we can't say a weighted thing like, "I love you," or, "Don't you do this to me." When we have to ask. That's tough. And sometimes we feel this frustration. And that's OK."

5:35 The basis of drama is conflict "It's amazing that, you know, drama, the basis of drama is conflict. That's what the playwrights and that's what the screenwriters are going for. That's what we come to watch. We come to watch, you know, the, we come to watch the good guy and the bad guy go at it. And, hopefully, the good guy will win. And it is more cathartic for us, the audience member, if the good guy has got allot of obstacles. That makes him even a bigger hero to us. Well, there comes the frustration. But, you know, actors don't want to deal with conflict. We want our lives to be easy. We don't want to deal with conflict. We don't want to deal with frustration. But that too is an emotion. And that too, how many characters do you know of, in films and in plays, are frustrated?"

6:45 Words and emotions leads to other words and emotions "One emotion or one word all of a sudden takes off, leads to another one. And that emotion, whether you win or lose within your brain, leads to another emotion. But what is wonderful is, these are what we call the creative juices. Your, you know, the subconscious then is beginning to work. And the feelings and the thoughts are beginning to go for you. So you don't have to do anything. You just have to let one, like a pin-ball machine, hit, you know, the flapper of the next one. You are then as we call it in the theatre, "In the Glove." You are working. You are there. You are beginning to feel it."

9:00 Each student reacts differently, she knows them before she does this "Every person is different. Every student is different. They will react differently. What I trust from being an actor and director and a human being is that when they're up there they'll react to the situation. Allot of the times I know them well enough by that point. I don't do gestalt work on people I do not know. I have usually have had a student for at least a semester before I begin the gestalt work,

if not a year. And I know them pretty well. I know, I pretty much surmise, I know how they're going to react. But what I do is to allow the situation to work on them."

10:07 Isolation "That is just being by themselves. And it's miraculous to me how, again, in all of the training with conservatories and schools and universities we do so much work on script analysis, and the body and the voice, and this and styles, but again, no one really looks at how just standing on the stage by yourself will impact you. That's it."

10:34 Three of the most stressful jobs in the world. Isolation onstage "They say three of the most stressful jobs in the world: combat soldier, kindergarten teacher, actor/public speaker. Because you are up there, and this has some parallels to the gestalt work: on the hotseat. You are the total focus of everyone's attention. And, actually, it's even worse, because you don't have a costume, you don't have lights, you don't have darkness. You know, you can see their faces. And after awhile, once you're just standing there I begin to see how they subtly reacting to the situation. And usually what they will do, what the person does, is that they pull out what I call 'tricks'. Or: 'The for-sure way of how I'm going to deal with a stressful situation.' Some people get angry. Some people start making jokes. Some people tap dancing around and begin entertaining us. You know, being the class clown. Some people run. You begin to see this kind of veil that goes over their eyes. And what we call, "Deer in headlights." Which we see actors do all the time. All of a sudden, "Oh, my god." And that's that kind of sheer out there terror. But sometimes there's another kind of terror that happens when you see this veil appear over people in which you can see them withdraw into themselves and they want to hide."

12:00 Instructor needs to be sensitive "What is good for the practitioner at this point is to be sensitive and intuitive to what is happening to the student in the moment. And that work is done by really watching their body. Watching, and, if you will, if I can use this esoteric idea, seeing where their mind is going. Seeing what's happening to their spirit. The body will tell you. You will see at times where people's hands will begin shaking. Maybe a hand will get upset. Or you

will see, you know, tension start in the face. Or kind of a, you know, smile that goes off. Or sometimes you'll see them shifting their weight totally to the left. What's happening there is the subconscious is manipulating the body in such a way. And that's my cue as the practitioner. And I begin trying to put the body back into neutral. And when I do that, that elicits another emotion that springs back to the subconscious of, "Oh, no it's out of, she's got control. She has control. Not me." So, it's vulnerable again. That creates another emotion of, perhaps a control issue might pop up. You see some actors that have lots of control issues."

13:36 "And then sometimes, just to throw them off-guard, if I see the control issues starting I'll just say something off the wall and I ask them to say it. Like, "Broccoli."

13:58 "If I see someone really retreating on me I'll ask them to do something that is the opposite of retreating. I'll ask them to do raspberries. Or make faces. Make faces is loads of fun. Because we're not allowed to do that in society. And it brings up another, a younger emotion, a time when we could do these things, a free, it's a freeing up time at that moment. And sometimes it's very frightening. Particularly if I've got a student that has a very, what I call the "maturity mask", or is very steady, they don't want to go outside of their own ego. And to do that for them sometimes is very hard. I think it elicits, again, a time that was free and fun and we could do it, and I'm not going to tell them not to. So, it's a freeing element."

14:53 "It's important in a gestalt work at that point, you know, that they understand, this is where you, the actor meets his masks. These are things he puts on in society. And, unfortunately, you'll put them on onstage. And sometimes they, his own masks get in the way of the character and that sometimes produces performances out of actors that are all the same. You see the same, you know, performance out of the actor over and over and over and over again because they're using their own masks. Sometimes that becomes blocks too. They can't get beyond that."

15:38 “But it’s important at that time just standing onstage, just looking at people that we explore what, and the actor is confronted with their own masks. And this is where they understand, and this is a term we’ll use later on, ‘peeling of the onion’, they begin to see how many skins that they have out there layered on, and different tricks that they’ve done. So they come in contact with that. And I help them gently to peel them off. And to begin to laugh at them, to look at them. And so that, what we have, or to shed them. What we have then is just a vulnerable actor at that point, who is now ready to deal with themselves, who they really are. And that’s probably one of the most powerful elements of the gestalt work is that you are no longer dealing with social masks, you are no longer dealing with all of that stuff. You are dealing with just you. You are dealing with your emotions your thoughts your feelings. And it’s a delicious time for an actor because rarely are we given that opportunity to explore the insides of ourselves. We have no expectations. There’s no right, there’s no wrong way. You’re always going to win. Remember you have the first and the last word. So, it’s a wonderful time for them. It can be very frightening. It can be very funny. And it is important in the third section there, when we begin to explore emotions, that the practitioner takes the student through the gambit, of not only sad stuff, or anger or jealousy or possession or our darker side. But to also take them through the lighter side. Through what’s funny, what’s joyous, what’s love. And also the tiny little emotions, the subtle ones that are often overlooked. When actors first begin the craft they usually have two colors, if you will, in their metaphorical palette. They have extreme anger and they have extreme love. So we get these two things going. We don’t have all of those delicious subtle little emotions that are in-between. And this empowers that also. So it’s important to run the gambit, to really ride the rollercoaster of all of it. Because what we’re looking for is a well, to develop a well emotionally rounded actor who can play all of the stuff and is not afraid of that who has experienced goes through all of that stuff.”

18:45 The connection between Gestalt and method acting “The connection between gestalt and method acting begins in the genesis, in the roots of gestalt psychotherapy. In the obituary for Laura Perls, 1990 New York Times states, and it’s a quote from her, that the seeds of gestalt psychotherapy began with acting. And with method acting techniques, with psychodrama, and role playing. And so, in a way, I think, it’s come full circle. The fact that we’re working back towards psychotherapy, it began in acting, now it’s coming back to it. So it’s working full circle. There are many techniques that the gestalt therapy took from method acting. One of which is role playing. In which you put yourself into the role and you act out the situation for yourself. They also took the term ‘hot seat’, in which in gestalt therapy, I understand, that the practitioner, or the person that’s working the student looks at an empty seat and they put the person there that they need to talk to or need to have words with or want to talk or have an issue with. They put that in an empty seat and the talk to them about all of that.”

Fourth walling, & psychodrama & role playing & role reversal

21:10 Method is a root of gestalt psychology & visa versa “I like to think of the fact that it’s, the techniques have come home again.” “They took allot of techniques from acting, because, psychoanalysts, you know, gestalt therapy was one of the first therapies in psychoanal- work to get the patient off the sofa. Off the couch. They were tired of them, you know, lying there and talking about their past. So, I always make the joke that, you know, gestalt therapy was the one that said, “Take up thy bed and walk.” And to do that they had to have another format in which the patient then began to do work. And their philosophy was to be in the moment. That they didn’t want to deal with the past of the, you know, student, or the patient. And they didn’t want to deal with the future, actually. They wanted to deal with the here and now, to be in the moment. Well, this is just, exactly, another technique that we talk about: being, the actor must be in the moment. So, they stole the techniques from, or not ‘stole’, ‘borrowed’, actually, from acting. Because it’s the same technique that the actor has to use: not to be in the past, or in the

future, but in the moment. So, they began to look at different techniques and styles that actors are using. Thus, they found that role-playing was a big one. Talking to the empty chair, the 'hot-seat', projecting emotions, and, you know, and literally verbalizing them. So that, instead of everything being internal and in the past, that the student, or the patient, begins to work with them in the present and get them out and stand on their feet and take responsibility for them. Rather than the old-style of lying on the sofa. So, I think that's some of the basis. Now, all of that is used in method acting."

24:00 Increasing awareness, being in the moment

25:05 Method practitioners and other acting systems are using gestalt techniques but don't know it "I think that, as I say, it's come full circle, it's come back home in this methodology for actors. And I think that even though most method teachers don't use gestalt work they are still using some of the same techniques that I use and that others use in the gestalt work for actors. They're doing it whether they know it or not. And there are other techniques that use it also." "Again, the work overlaps itself. But, it's very supportive and understanding that all roads do go to Mecca. We're seeing the same things occur and the same evidence in all three methodologies for the actor. And thus it's substantial and good tools to use."

26:45 Is there an order to the steps of the process "Some actors, some students go into a different direction and sometimes I have to just go with them. I mean they literally, physically are telling me what to do. Not verbally, but physically. And sometimes with a very angry person that when they're standing up there, and if we can't get through that mask of anger then we may as well go ahead and explore it."

28:10 The subject thinks that the instructor is manipulating them, but in reality, the subject is leading the work "I don't fight it. I go with them. There's another fallacy that this just brings up. Just in talking about this. That, you know, the student, or the person with whom I'm working on thinks that I am manipulating them. But, in essence, I am actually, I'm actually following

their lead. I'm actually going with what their body is telling me and their, you know, what's going on with them. So, you know, sometimes the, their is now real order. Usually I would like to work with the vulnerability, the levity first, and then begin exploring emotions outside of that. I do like to go, as I said, I like to explore anger because anger is very hard for people sometimes. It's not within many people's comfort zones."

29:19 "But, at the same time I think that there is a need to explore, conversely, you know, the vulnerable and the love and the lighter emotions. The fun, the joy, young emotions too, child-like feelings and that sort of thing too. It's important to get all of it."

29:42 "Sometimes they'll lead me and then where they're going sometimes I will lead them away, you know, into other areas too. But I take my cues off of what the student is doing."

30:05 What kind of attitude should a subject bring to the work, disclosure "You have to have a sense of adventure. And that's the way that I like to put it." "I'm not going to tell you what to think." "And this is a totally new process. Of course you're going to be curious. Of course you're going to be a little frightened. Of course you're going to be skeptical. Of course you're going to be judgmental. You're a student. You're supposed to be learning. So it brings that baggage with it." "So, what I like to say is, "Think of it as and adventure."

31:24 It doesn't matter what kind of attitude they have "Because they're going to have what they're going to have. I mean, you just have to be here now. It's a sense of adventure. Just come with me. And I would encourage this: allow whatever would happen will happen. Be at peace with that. If you feel this, great. The idea is to feel something. If you think this, fine. But the idea, again, is to be alive and thinking and feeling in the moment. And to go, perhaps, where you have been frightened of going before. And that's why, again, I think that the adventure, you're going on an adventure. Is something that I have developed over the last year or two of the ten or twenty, twenty years now that I have been doing this technique."

32:30 “But I like the adventuresome spirit. I think that that opens people up to the unexpected. To see what their boundaries are like. To see where they have drawn lines in the sand that they didn’t even know that they had drawn. And that leads them to this self-discovery that within them are horizons and worlds they never thought about. And sometimes they’re surprised at what they find. And they’re encouraged by it. And they begin to realize who they are as human beings and become more accepting of that.”

33:20 Whatever they bring she can work with “I’m only a guide. I can’t break them or make them or make them laugh or make them cry or make them do any of it. I take what you bring to the table. And that is pretty much the same example, that’s a metaphor for what they’re doing to their own work. They’re bringing themselves to the work. What they are. And they’re going to bring all of their baggage with it too. Closed mind, open mind. They may think they have an open mind and come to it and they realize that the doors are locked. Or, they may think that they are just totally closed and walk up there and something inside of them goes, “Yes. I want to tell you everything.” So they have this emotional, just, purging that happens to them and it’s a surprise.”

34:24 the mind is 75% subconscious.

35:35 “And it is empowering to an actor to be able to recognize what they are, who they are. And they can give that then to a character. In understanding the empathy for a character, giving that over to a character.”

35:55 It’s more of a subconscious process “The actor believes that I’m dealing with them in the here and now. And I am. But I’m really working on something that’s back in the back of the brain, in the memory. Because when you are dealing with the body, it’s kicking forward. Because there’s no one there. There’s no one standing in front of you yelling at you, or smiling at you, or saying, “Hello,” or any of that. We’re dealing within your imagination.”

36:38 The actors can do it to themselves “An actor can. After they have been through the gestalt work and after they have been through a semester of watching their colleagues go through it, they can do the work themselves. Just exactly the way that I do it on them. They can do the work themselves in a rehearsal process with a director. They certainly can. They can identify within the script and through their character analysis and their work what it is that this character-”

37:30 How actors can use it “Actors can use the technique by themselves after they’ve been through the gestalt work, after they’ve been Gestalted, and after, I think, they’ve had a class in it, they’ve watched their colleagues go through the work, and so forth. And to have been in a classroom situation with an instructor that is employing the gestalt work into scene work. In showing them, “Now this is a prime time for you to be able to do some improves, and and some work on this.” And then they can carry this on through their professional work by themselves. And they can use the entire process by themselves, with the four steps that I have talked about. Then the actor then after they have done, of course all of their script analysis work with the character and understanding who, what, where, how, and when. And what the character is dealing with, the emotions that they are dealing with, the problems that they face, the obstacles that they face, they can do their own gestalt work for characters.”

38:27 How she’s used it on herself & how she started doing it to others, the magic IF
 “I did it. I’ve done this myself. This is how I began doing the gestalt work on other people. Because, a director, and my colleagues, that I was acting with, some fellow actors, saw me doing the work. And it came from, there were times in, two or three particular rehearsals that I felt like I was not really feeling what the character was feeling. I couldn’t identify totally. So I began doing some of the gestalt work with the character. And instead of it being me doing the gestalt work, I was ‘Anna’, or, I was, you know, another character. And I began doing the work for her. And it brought me closer in. And from that I began to realize that, indeed, I was

not only rehearsing body and voice and scene and blocking but I'm rehearsing my emotions too.

I'm working the magic 'IF' that Stanislavsky talks about. The magic "IF" is: 'If I were this person, is if were in this situation'. To bring as close as I can to the given circumstances and emotions that this character is going through. To employ extreme empathy."

39:47 "And I began to find that directors were thankful. Because they didn't want to have to deal with improvis that dealt with emotions or, and they didn't know. And they were thankful, because it makes, I'm doing the work myself. And I was becoming more and more independent. And my fellow actors would become fascinated by the fact that I could, indeed, quote, 'connect' emotionally to their needs. And, it's not only just tears or anger, but sometimes just great giddy fun and laughter at times. But extremes emotions, even small ones. So, I began to help fellow actors with it too, in showing them how to do it."

40:30 "But, yes, an actor can, after they've been through the work, carry the work with them and gestalt themselves, or gestalt their character, to explore the emotions that they're working in. And it can be done one of two ways. The actor can take the 'hot-seat' approach, in which they're standing alone onstage working."

40:57 End

Dr.V's Interview, Part Three, Camera Right

00:04 How directors can use it

1:08 Oprah Winfrey, Stephen Spielberg and The Color Purple

2:48 "When you are placed in that situation you reach into a resource that you've been, your spirit has been given. And that's from your past, your history, it's from emotions that you've experienced before, and it's, it's the 'adrenaline of intelligence' as I call it. The fight or flight. And you will use it. But sometimes actors have been conditioned not to do it. And we're

certainly conditioned not to do it in society, unless we are faced with a life-threatening situation. And there, you see, those wonderful stories on television where men can lift a car off of a baby, or, you know, stop blood flow, or perform surgery, or so forth. Well, that's what actors have to do in front of audiences all the time."

3:49 "And so directors, it's a wonderful tool for directors to be able to help an actor into what I call the 'zone' the emotional working zone that they can get spontaneity and in-the-momentness happening to them. And it's very cathartic. And it's very easy for them as opposed to having to manufacture tears or dredge up, what do they call it? Sense memory or emotional memory which totally takes you, for my knowledge, out of it, out of the moment. You're not in the moment with the scene or with the other actor. You're think about your dead dog dying or something. You're away. You're not in this moment here. It's not immediate. And that's what we need to use."

5:04 "Allot of actors can't. They can't bring themselves to the material. They can't feel the empathy. And the director feels inept or unable to bring them there. So this is another tool to be able to help the actor to feel the moment. And from being able to feel the moment brings catharsis. And that's probably one of the most empowering things for an actor to have."

6:35 What's the difference between acting and performing (relatives vs. friends)

8:33 How feasible is the exercise in professional, academic, public school, community theatre
 "One thing that has to be embraced, and understood clearly, that the gestalt work is simply an exercise. It is not a finished product. It is a process."

9:25 "It's appropriate for all kinds of work. I've seen, I've used it on film work. I've used it in stage work. I've used it as an actor and a director. I've used it as a choreographer even in trying to elicit types of emotion and that sort of thing."

9:50 Cautionary advice on its use "What one must be careful about is how and when you use it. How and when you use it. And I think that there are some very common sense rules that one

has to address with the work. I think that the practitioner must know the actor very well. I don't think that it's fair to gestalt someone that you've only known for two or three days. I think you have to know this person pretty well. I also believe that it has to be done for the purest of intentions. You're doing this just for the work, for the character. Not for work for the person, you know, or to be mean to the person, or to, I don't know, some of the god-awful things that I hear about directors doing to actors, I'm not in that camp. This is not to psychoanalyze anyone, or to get into their past histories, or to solve any of their problems. The work is also not for anyone who that has been medically diagnosed as being unstable. This is not for them. This work is not for them. This work is the work of as stable of a human being as you can get. We all, I think, have our neurosis and problems and so forth. So that's not a problem. But this is certainly not for anyone who's been diagnosed with a severe medical problem. Also I think the time and the place is very important. Where it's done. I don't think that this is something that one wants to do for, you know, Joe-Blow-Public. I think that this is not for pedestrians to see. This is work that actors understand and directors understand..."

12:00 When it works best "It works best when the student has an amount of respect and trust for the person who's doing the gestalt on them. Too, that has to be established also. But the biggest thing that has to be established, also, is for, this is work for the character."

12:21 "I have seen actors go through many gestalt works as warm-ups for performances, prior to performances, standing in wings. I have seen people do this sort of work standing off-camera, waiting for a close-up. Again, variations of this work have been done. Directors, film directors have put actors in surprise situations, you know, and done the work also. And, I think it can be done anywhere. I think that timing is everything. Timing is everything. And that leads to the maturity and the wisdom, I think, of the director and the actor.

13:09 "I think that an actor has to be very careful and guard their emotional life and work. I don't think that the work, this kind of work, is for everyone. I don't believe that an actor can do

this kind of work all the time in a professional situation. Some nights they'll have to depend upon technique."

"I think that method actors should be, and are, all actors should be well versed in outside in technical techniques, and inside out too."

"I think that actors have to be wise in understanding that there are some directors and some people in the world that are not kind and, perhaps, would take advantage of their emotional capabilities."

"I would hope for a world in which we can use all of ourselves. In which we can use, not only the body and the voice, but we are using our emotions too."

14:35 "Because a director, you know, stands to lose the confidence of an actor if they do it inappropriately. So, they have to think of all angles of what they're doing. Because, ultimately, what you want out of an actor is an excellent performance, a spontaneous one in which they can be proud of, the director can be proud of and there's a bond then that is shared between those two people."

15:10 Is academia the indigenous environment for this exercise "It was taught to me in academia. And I thought, I think it was taught to my teacher in a conservatory setting. So I believe that this work is, the genesis of it is, most probably, in the academic setting."

15:53 "But I think that it is a learning tool to get to the emotions and to learn to work with the emotions. I don't think that this is a professional theatre, that it has its genesis there. I think it's a learning technique. And it's, probably, either first explored in the academy and then in the conservatory setting, I think."

16:33 "I think that gestalt work should be done in the academy because there's accountability. You have a professor, who probably, you'd hope, has been trained, has a background in training, who is working with a school psychologist, just in case something would happen, or they need some additional work or help with a student. And, you know, in a rare case that that

would ever happen. I have never had that happen. But, also, the fact that there is continuity. In that you are taking a class, and a accountability, everyone in the class should go through the gestalt work. And what happens for the actor is that you form this very close bond with one another as a support group. And you know one another well. And you have the confidence to share yourself with them. And, sometimes, for actors, this is the first time they have ever done that. I mean, really showed all of the good, the bad, the ugly the indifferent, all that stuff to a fellow cast member. That they have ever trusted someone that much, a fellow actor, that much. So, you see, there is this the accountability of their colleagues also in the work. And then they go through this work for an entire semester, that's three months, and then, we would hope, that they would go through scene work, which would be an entire year of the work. So, you see, they grow in the work."

18:04 Poorly trained gestalters

18:26 "It is a training technique. So, I would argue that this is best suited in a college/ university setting in which accountability is there. I have great respect for the work and I don't think that it should be abused."

19:14 "It's very important because, again, as I said, the fourth part is understanding, the actor begins to realize that, they transpose or project the feelings then from colleagues one day to audience. That the audience is here for me and is supportive and is going through this with me. I'm not alone up here. I'm not the man at the mark and they're the judges. That is dispelled."

18:52 "You have to make a commitment to the work. And everyone has to make a commitment to one another to be there, to do it."

20:23 Is it better for an actor to do it to himself or have the director do it to them in the professional setting "I believe that actors have to be independent in that sense of knowing their craft well enough, have enough tools at their disposal so that they can do as much as they

possibly can on their own.” “So, I believe in training actors to be as independent as they possibly can.”

22:18 It would embarrass/ insult a professional actor, there’s a better way to do that “The director has to be very very sensitive to where and when and how this is being done. Because you don’t want the converse to happen. You don’t want, you know, an actor to withdraw and become distanced from you. You want them to open up and to feel what the character is feeling. You have to become vulnerable to be able to do that.”

24:44 How she’s used this exercise as a director in a professional setting

25:40 Community Theatre & Public School Theatre “I have even been asked, “Why am I doing this with college freshmen?” At the second semester, not the first semester but the second semester. And my answer is, “The sooner you get the correct training to a person, the faster they’re going to be, you know, on the right track.” My second answer, again, is, “If you wait too long they’ll learn bad habits. So, learn how to ‘perform’ tears or ‘mimic’ an emotion and not really feel it.”

26:32 When an actor is ready to do this “At the same time there’s an argument for maturity. When is this, um, time to do it? I find that, even at the college level, not all people are ready. And it’s, they’re perfectly sane. And they’re perfectly stable to be able, psychologically, to be able to do the work. But they’re not mature enough to embrace the work yet. And it’s not going to really do them any good. They would see it as being silly or funny or weird and not really embrace the work when they can. And I think that there is some timing element involved. I think that there is a right time for everyone to be able to do this work. I think you know this in our lives.”

27:15 “There are times when people say, “You know, I think it’s time for me to go into therapy. To look, I want to look at some things about my life.” And there are times when people don’t want to go there at all. They just cannot face some issues.”

27:29 “I think there are times when people become very retrospective, and introspective. They want to look at their lives and think about what they’ve done, how they feel, how they’ve matured, where they have growth, where they don’t. And they’re strong enough, emotionally at that time in their life to really have a hard look at who and what they are.”

27:50 “These are people that are ready to do gestalt work. That’s what this is about. They’re ready to do some real hard work.”

27:56 “And then there are times when we’re not, we’re not ready for it. And so, I think you have to be wise.”

28:18 “I think you have to be very, very wise. I think the person practicing the gestalt has to know and evaluate the student to say, “Yes, this is a candidate for the work. No, this person is not ready yet.” And it maybe just another semester, until, or, a little bit of time, before they are ready for the work.”

28:44 Disclosure (revealing the memory behind the emotion) “Well, I have to point out again that the work is not meant to be psychoanalyzing actors. It is not meant for that. I find that this is a very private affair. That, an actor’s history, their families, their issues, their good, bad, and ugly are their own. They are their own.”

29:32 “You keep those secret. That’s your journal work. That’s stuff for you. That’s your personal business. This work is not for disclosure. That’s not what this is about. This is not to psychoanalyze. What it is about is for the actor to discover, “Wow, I had no idea I was still holding on to all of this garbage.” Or, “Wow, I had no idea that, um, there’s this much joy in me. I can play comedy. There’s lots of joy in me.”

30:12 “I have lots of romantic or silly or fun or, qualities about me. But I just haven’t explored them.”

31:51 “I don’t want to know these things. That’s yours. And it is just for you.”

32:00 “And what is wonderful, empowering for actors to realize, when they’re going through the work, is that all of this stuff, this disclosure stuff, that’s the stuff, that is the meat behind which they’re going to create characters and situation and things. It’s theirs. It’s no one else’s business. It’s their’s. It’s not mine.”

32:30 Disclosure (what the instructor tells the group about the process and goal of the exercise)

“I explain to them the process. I explain to them the history of gestalt, of psychotherapy, how it relates to acting, how this is going to be used if they choose to use it to, as a tool for their emotional work with characters and in plays and so forth. And after that I don’t tell them much more. It’s important that they don’t know too much, because actors are famous for fixing things. If I tell them, “You’re going to respond in “A,B, or C manner.” They will try to do just the opposite. You tend to be children about these things. If I say, “You’re going to have a wonderful experience, yah-da-da-da-da.” They might have a horrible one. I don’t know what’s going to happen. They know the basis. I give them the basis of the work. And I also explain to them the four components of what we’re going to be going through. And explaining to them, “This is how the work works.” And that, I also explain the ground rules. That it’s a safe environment. And, that it is an adventure. That everyone will be going through the work together. And that, also, that the work that is done stays in the room. What plays here stays here. And that we don’t go out and, you know, share with the world what someone did during the middle of a gestalt. Because your turn is next. So there is this tremendous respect that happens for each other and for actors. And the respect for the acting, respect for the craft grows immensely. And I tell them, after the fact, after they’ve gone through the work, and after we sit down together, and I ask them, “What did you experience? What did you, what did you have happen? What did you discover about yourself? How will you employ this within your acting?” And then I ask each of their colleagues that are watching them to talk to them. And, nine times out of ten, they talk to them about them as a person, and as an actor, about their

blocks, about their wins, about stuff, their strengths, their weaknesses. And each of them have this dialogue after the gestalt with the person that's being Gestalted. And what I find is, again, that after the person does that they project this kind of confidence onto the audience. When they're performing from that point on they begin to project that kind of support to them. And I talk about, at that point, after they've gone through it, we then talk about the blocks that we've seen. Then what 'lives in your needs', and this is a term that you will hear me talking about, as we'd talked about, things live in the body in different places. Memories, or blocks, that are in shoulders, or in the throat, or in the jaw, or in the knees, or soforth, that the actor can get in touch with. And things that we've explored about them: where their comfort zones are, where they like to live, where, what they like to express, and what is hard for them to express. Some people have a very difficult time expressing anger. And we talk about that. We talk about, with some actors, perhaps, you know, "You're going to be playing the nice guy all the time, you know, if we don't get you to learn to express anger or angst and some of the weightier things. And you're going to have a little shy of a career here." Conversely, I have allot of angry young men I work with, You know, that have got the corner marked on the new Deniro world and know what they're in character actors and their dark sides. But we need to work on the lighter stuff with them; the romantic, the light, the ease, the joy, the kid-like qualities, that sort of thing. So we, you know, we discuss that. About where the comfort zones are and where things we need to work on are."

36:55 The last actor in the group think they know more than the one who went first

37:20 She doesn't know why it works, it has long range effects "What is mysterious to me about the process, and I don't know all the answers about the process, is that it has long-range effects. It's like being vaccinated. You know, it lasts, it stays in your body for a long, long time. And I can't answer all the questions of why it works. But I see that. And what's interesting about the last person going is that we always think we know all of the answers and we think we

know what's going to happen to us. But you never know 'til you step on that stage what will happen to you. And it's a surprise."

38:10 She doesn't tell them when they will go

**39:20 Does it work better with a group "I think the gestalt work is meant to have a group there with you. It's meant to have. Because, when you're doing the work, it's so audience oriented also, and it's trust, it's learning, an actor learns through the gestalt work to trust themselves, trust their emotions, trust and have confidence in that. And also you see that, another fringe benefit of the work is that the actor is no longer frightened of the audience. They're not guarded about the audience. Because I've redefined the audience for them. The work has redefined them. They're supporting. They're there. And they've seen the worst of you. You know? And usually, the best and the worst comes out of you in the gestalt work. And if you have done that in front of a colleague, a peer, you can do anything in front of an audience. And so there is this confidence measure that begins to happen. And, usually within, you know, the class, your worst enemy is sitting there and your best friend. So you get, and you get another fringe benefit there, of, and you begin to realize that you walk out the class with, totally intact, and there's another stripe of confidence that comes to your ego. And so the benefits are amazing there in that sense. And I've even noticed that, again, the enemy has to talk to you, and has to tell you what they see. And I've seen amazing things with that happen. Because, here is this person who is totally vulnerable, totally exposed, talking to there worst enemy. And they live through it. It's fine. Sometimes they end up being friends. The confidence level soars again. So that, again, the actor is learning that, "Wow, to cry is not weak. To scream is not exposing myself. To care and to love unconditionally and whole-heartedly with abandonment, you know, is not, I will not lose myself." I mean, these are tremendous lesson to be learned in two square feet, you know, in a very safe environment, and it's very freeing, I think, to an actor, and, at the same time, very mature." 42:11 End

Dr.V's Interview, Part Four, Camera Right

00:25 Long term benefits of the work, Emotional intelligence “We were talking about the long-term benefits of the gestalt work. And, as I said, when you’ve been the work, being vaccinated. It lasts for a lifetime. And it has ongoing effects for the actor throughout his career, particularly, or her career, particularly if they continue to do the work. And what happens I think ultimately, or accumulatively, for the actor is that the work results in a form of emotional intelligence and an athleticism. You become an emotional gymnast almost, and being, and but, a guru with that too. Being able to have the wisdom, the flexibility, the versatility, and the maturity to be able to use your emotional self well and employ that within characters. And thus, again, the gestalt idea of using the whole self and that the whole, being greater than the parts, indeed, to me, this is the missing link, the missing work out of all of the acting techniques known in the world today. We have to employ using the emotional side of that. And I think that what we lack, not only in acting, but in all of our culture, in the western culture, is a sense of emotional intelligence.”

2:15 Crying lessons “It does appear that way. It does appear that way. It is a difficult process and technique to watch. It’s difficult to watch. It’s difficult to see people go on this emotional rollercoaster. Up, down, in, and out. And sometimes it’s very boring. And it’s, you know, “Come on. What are you doing?” You know. And it’s, it appears to be self-indulgent. It appears to be silly. It appears to be, let’s see, what else I can say negative about it? It appears to be child-like. Temper-tantrum throwing, that sort of thing. But, again, it’s different when you’re standing there. When you’re the speaker, when you’re standing in the hot-seat. When you’re standing on they spot. It’s different for the person going through it, because there’s all this stuff that’s going through them internally. And it’s more than just crying lessons. Sometimes, I think, it’s very easy to cry.”

3:23 “So, it’s more than just that. Sometimes, I think, it’s more difficult to show some of the subtler emotions, than it is for the big ones. I think we can all scream and yell sometimes if we can get ourselves there. But, what about longing? What about jealousy? What about fear?”

4:00 “It’s much the same way that I’m speaking of here. Maybe just the subtler ones. And those are very difficult to get to because they’re very specific and they’re very subtle to get to and to latch onto and to show and sometimes can only be shown in a close up and in a fleeting moment.”

5:04 “Who is a method actor, I might add. Has this ability to be available for you to be able to see his thoughts and his feelings in his face. So, I would argue it’s more than crying lessons. It does appear from the outside, when one is looking at it, to be psychological derangement. I think people would argue, that had been through the process, to say, “No, I was feeling allot more than just tears.”

5:42 What defines a session as a success “If the student has embraced at least some of their fears, some of the emotions that are outside of their comfort zone, and also explored the ones that are comfortable for them, and if they at least recognize the impact of being onstage by themselves, what that’s like to be up there by yourself, and to understand, at least, some of their masks. And throughout that becomes self-knowledge. That is a success. If any amount of self-knowledge comes out of it then that’s successful. Not everybody is going to cry. Not everyone is going to come to anger. Not everyone is going to feel just total bliss. Some that go through it the first time, may have just a little bit. The door may open and then they may run. And then the second time the really opens. But the fact of the matter is, somethings that appear successful to you and I may not be the big thing for them. It could be something very, very subtle. One can also say that it is a success if they stand up there and go through the work. That they’re strong enough to go through that.”

7:43 “Success has to be measured in tiny victories. Success should be measured, according to psychotherapy terms, in small victories.”

8:16 “And for an actor, you know, a success has to be based on small victories. Sometimes it’s standing up there without clowning for us. It’s learning just to stand onstage and face your peers without doing anything. That is a success.”

9:07 “That’s a success. So they are, they’re termed in very specific manners of successes. And that how I would define success for an actor.”

9:20 Only the actor knows for sure if the session was a success “Only the actor knows for sure. That’s quite right. This is very, I can’t give a grade on this work. I mean, “You cried, that’s an ‘A.’ You threw up, that’s a ‘B.’” You know, I can’t do that. It’s not, gestalt work goes outside the bounds of academia. It’s a gift. And I’m sure that there are allot of educators who would question me on that. In saying, “What value is this?” I’ll have to let my students who’ve gone through the work tell you what the value is. But the success to them is based upon what they got out of it and how much they can carry forward on it. This is not something that can be measured. Again, I accuse the western cultures of, we have been so intelligence oriented in that, if it’s not quantifiable, it’s not worth anything. If we can’t measure it, sell it, put it in a bottle, or market it then it’s not quantifiable in this culture. And that’s why emotional intelligence... If we had emotional intelligence there would be no divorces and there would be, you know, no killing, there would be beautiful acting”

11:12 The constructive use of emotions, a work out, building emotional muscles “Yes, and the exploration of them. And it’s flexing muscles, it’s a work out for the emotions. If an actor never has the ability to explore his or her emotional world in a safe space they cannot do it onstage. You can’t expect a runner to just get up, without warming up stretching and being conditioned over a year’s worth of time, to be able to get up and run an 80k race. They can’t do it. They simply cannot do it. And it’s unfair to ask the actor to be able to do it.”

12:27 “I think that it is arguable to day that many people do not understand the amount of work and craft that goes into acting because we want it to seem easy. We want it to seem effortless. I mean, let’s face the fact, we don’t go to the theatre to see the ballerina sweat. We go to the theatre to see the ballerina float and fly. But up underneath all of that she’s hurting, and her toes are hurting, and yes, she is sweating, and her muscles are exerting tremendous energy, and she would really probably love to scream and yell at times. But we don’t go to see her sweat. We go to see her fly and float. And it is the same with actors.”

13:33 “ And the same thing is true for being able to work on your emotions, to be able to give that to a character. So, in this sense there’s a paradigm shift in this, in which we believe it’s all smoke and mirrors. But, in actuality, it’s allot or hard work that the actor is doing to be able to present a character so effortlessly onscreen. But, in a sense, because they do it so easily, we believe we could all be actors. We can all do it. It’s very simple: just watch enough TV.”

14:16 Overall synopsis of the work: Exploring and expanding emotional potential, Identifies blocks “There are many reasons for it. It also explores and expands their emotional potential. It identifies their blocks, you know, what they are unwilling to do. It creates a safety zone for actor to shed their masks and to explore, what I call, and ‘emotional repertoire.’ It also helps to redefine the audience as a support group, as opposed to a critical mass that comes to watch them. It also helps them to celebrate their human-ness. To understand who they are as a human being, and to help them identify themselves with characters and with all of humanity.

Accumulatively I think that the best part about the work is that is also redefines, for the actor, the difference between ‘performing’ and ‘acting.’ The difference between mimicking an emotion and really feeling the emotion. It also helps the actor understand what it’s like to have that cathartic feeling after a performance, that good feeling that happens. It’s very important.”

16:24 “And, as I said, the long term benefits from the work, these are actors that can become open and emotionally available to directors on a dime, in a take. Or take after take after take

after take. And that's what directors want, the ability to work like that. And able to use all of themselves, as I said. Eventually, I think that it creates an emotionally mature, strong, and versatile actor, one that is going to be able to work in all of different realms."

17:25 Hazards of its misuse "I think horror stories abound about actors in general. And I have such a respect for the craft and for the art and for actors out there. And I hope to impart that to my students. And, again, I think we have to work very hard as actors, in this country particularly, because, again, the publicist and the marketing people have etched out sort of a mythic idea of what an actor is about. You can't trust them because they could be acting. They may not be telling you all the truth. Do they really know who they are? Or they're just a combination of all the characters that they play? All of these myths, which are not, I would hope, are not true. We have that myth to deal with to begin with. We also have to be careful of how we represent ourselves to the general public, I think, in that sensation. And, also, the understanding that the work potentially, yes, can be very hurtful to an actor, or to a director, or to a situation. In that, we are dealing with people's feelings. We are dealing with people's insides. And that's, that's the most, you're dealing with people's souls and their spirit. And that's the most important part of a human being in my estimation. And it is, if you will, the car, the generator. It is the engine that makes us go. And it makes us who and what we are. And we have to respect that. And we have to make sure that we are dealing and mindfully, as the Zen Buddhist would say, that we are handling and dealing mindfully with the heart and souls of people. And just the same way when we're creating people, that same kind of respect because we're dealing- We represent all kinds of people, people that have been abuse or molested or go to prison or who are insane or who are challenged or- We're dealing with, you know, those that have been marginalized sometimes. And we deal with the mainstream too. We deal with what it's like to be in all levels and ages of life from being very old to being very young to being adolescent to being all of these things. So, we have to handle to portrayal of all of these people

with respect, humanity with respect. Thus, we've got to know how it is they feel, truly. I mean, you really, as the Indians say, "You can't know a man until you've walked in his moccasins." It is not fair to mimic walking in the moccasins because we don't know that. Even children can detect a fake. You know, so, it's insulting to the intelligence of others for us not to portray it. And at the same time, we have to also be very careful of how we treat our own souls. And knowing what we can handle at the moment."

21:36 "So, again, there is a time and place and a, I think that a director and an actor and a teacher when you work with this kind of work, and when we do the kind of work that we do we have to protect, you know, treat one another's hearts as if they were our own. And at the same time challenge one another's hearts to grow and to face and to see maybe the wrong or the good or to get us outside of our comfort zone, but not go too far. And that really demands maturity and wisdom to know how far to go."

22:20 Power vs. Partnership "And you have to be, in that sense, because, we are dealing with, not only our own souls but the souls of others and how it will impact that. Because we are the merit culture and we have to really think about how this is going to affect the lives of people that see it. How it affects, not only our lives and the people we're working with's lives, but how it's going to affect other people that we're working with. And that's very important. And that's a sense of being mindful, being very careful about what it is we're doing. But, at the same time, again, being adventuresome. Can we face this? Can we do this?"

23:30 "But, again, you know, with this kind of work, it brings that kind of emotional wisdom, understanding your parameters. And also, I think it promotes a type of intuitiveness that the actor becomes more in sync and in understanding of feeling or that another actor is going through or a director is going through or the character is going through. And I think it provides a kind of wisdom, as I'm saying, an emotional intelligence, a growth in emotional intelligence of what's going on, what's happening."

24:33 Skeptics “I think, and I have had students that have gone through the work just to, because they knew, they were frightened for their grades. And even then, I think, they were surprised that they got something out of it. I’ve never had someone to walk away from this experience and say, “So?” I’ve never had that happen. But I also know that the work is not for everyone. That it’s not what they want to do. It’s not the level or the commitment that they care to explore their characters or with their work.” “Not everyone is going to be suited for this work.”

26:12 The extremist obsession with emotions can be distraction away from theatre’s, play’s, & character’s higher objectives “It’s self-indulgence. I have little respect for those people who use this kind of work to be sado-masochistic or just have some sort of hormonal fest or emotional nightmare, whatever, and I’ve seen productions like that, in which this is done. And I’ve heard horror tales of extremes that directors will go to to make actors feel stuff or become characters, or whatever. And I, again, I think that the golden mean is the best rule here. That, if you go too far in either direction you’re an extremist and it’s not going to really, I don’t think it’s really going to be a benefit to the actor or the audience. It sounds like more so, if you’re going in that direction it sounds like the actor and the director need therapy. They need psychotherapy. They’re not a candidate for the gestalt work for actors. They’re a candidate for therapy. Any time that you begin to go in any extremes like this, and I’ve heard the horror tales, I’ve heard them, I’ve seen, but I, just, I don’t solicit nor support this at all. And that’s why I say the gestalt work is only an exercise. Only an exercise. It is not the end product. And it’s not meant for general consumption of audiences to see. They would be horrified, I’m sure. I would be. You know, as a director, I would be horrified. And it’s not meant to be that at all, at all. And I’m not, I don’t have a very high opinion of directors that would abuse actors in that manner. And to make them uncomfortable and to abuse them in this sort of way to get to a character. I just don’t, I don’t believe in that. I believe it’s a choice of the actor to what degree that they want to

go into the psyche of a character. And how much research it is that they want to do with it. And I think that's their choice to go into. But I, I'm concerned about the extreme measures to the end. What we're about is ultimately is for the actor to feel a type of, to be able to feel the character, to be able to to understand, intellectually understand and to feel an to use these tools, to be able to create the character. But, to have to damage their instrument in any way, to be able to create the character, is not healthy. It is not healthy what so ever."

29:30 It's a tool, neither good or bad but its use could be "Exactly. I mean, A hammer builds buildings. But it could also kill someone if it's thrown at someone's head. And that's where I tell actors that they have to draw the line in creating characters."

30:42 "I don't believe in damaging or hurting any one's instrument. That is analogous, to me, to an actress, "Well, you can get the role, but I want you to belt this song. And I want you to sing, and I'm demanding that you, sure, you're going to do two performances a day, belting." Well, it's going, she's going to get the Academy Award for it, sure. But it's going to damage her instrument. And, eventually, she will not be able to sing. She'll have nodes and so forth. It can also be said, the same thing, for the emotions. Now, this woman has, the singer, right? Has to do scales everyday. But they're done in a correct manner. And, thus, she can sing High C's, right? Without hurting her voice and not belting, or whatever. It's the same thing for someone working emotionally, correctly, I think. And in a manner that they know how to work well. You can work destructively or constructively. And, if it hurts, if you're, if it's crossing a line there then it's not worth it."

31:56 Emotional scales "Yes. Yeah. You could liken this to emotional scales. That, the gestalt work is practicing your emotional scales. You're going through different colors and rhythms and hitting notes. Yes, it could be, that's a good metaphor."

32:33 End

Workshop, Camera Left: Introduction

00:50 Start, Dr. V. introduces herself and the subject

1:00 “Before we get rolling I would like to tell you just a little bit about the gestalt work and its historical and original background. Originally the gestalt methodology was a psychological therapy that was started by Frederick Perls and his wife Lara, who were two of the first practitioners to do the work.

1:20 “And in an obituary that, in the New York Times, for Lara Perls, who died in 1990, it was stated that some of the genesis of the therapy was taken from theatrical practices.”

1:45 “So, in a sense, the work that you will see today had it’s origins in the theatre, goes to psychology, and now is coming back to the theatre.”

1:54 “It was introduced to me in the late seventies when I was working on my Master’s at SMU. It was taught to me by an acting professor there. She had done work at the neighborhood playhouse and on Broadway and had learned the technique in New York and came to SMU and I studied with her for a year. I went through the gestalt work myself with twelve other colleagues and then the next semester we did scene work with her for an entire semester in which we employed the gestalt methodology into scene work.”

3:36 “I began to find that there was no real methodology for helping young actors to arrest what happens emotionally with a character. In colleges, in universities, in conservatories we really have covered the gambit voice workshops and body workshops and script workshops and improvisations and style. But we don’t go anywhere near, “How do I create this character emotionally?” In the western culture, in the united states, if we, it even breathes psychology or analyst we immediately believe, “Well, what’s wrong with you?” Acting teachers run from the idea that perhaps we have to deal with the emotional life of an actor or even get near a character. But, indeed, that’s what makes the performing arts so alive is the immediacy of what

the performer is feeling onstage and we get to witness that. But the work never goes anywhere near it.

4:38 “So, what the gestalt work is about is to help the actor to explore their emotional landscape. It is not designed to psychoanalyze you or to bring up your past or any of that. But it’s, that is for you. Those are your memories. But what it is about is to create a safe space in which you can explore who and what you are and what you feel. And, hopefully, to be able to give those feelings to the character. So, in general, that’s what it’s about.”

5:10 “A word of warning: what you’re about to see today in this process, and I’ll explain a little about the process in a moment, can be very exciting. It can be very frightening at times, because we are dealing with raw human emotion. Sometimes I have had students to say, “This is very difficult to watch.” Well, arguments are hard to watch. Sometimes it’s very hard to watch someone who’s breaking up in complete laughter. It’s hard to deal with five year olds who, what I say are just the kingpins of the emotional world because they can scrape their knees at one moment and be crying and then the next minute laughing and then the next minute telling you a joke. They are the emotional acrobats. And this is where I want to help actors to return to: that time in which you could stretch emotional muscles and have the freedom and that versatility to be able to do so. But, sometimes this is very difficult to watch. Sometimes there are some emotions that are hard: anger, for instance, or jealousy or whatever. And it’s difficult to watch that. But, at the same time, the catharsis that happens for the actor, and the understanding, is wonderful.”

6:25 “This is not a technique that can be practiced without training. Also, and I think that’s something else that needs to be stated too. I always recommend that someone has had training in this needs to at least have been with the work for a year.”

7:00 “But, indeed, so, I warn you: sometimes there’s strong language, that I ask the actors to say, and sometimes gestures that might be offensive to an audience’s sensibilities. So, I ask you

to be adventuresome with us in where we go, because I never know what will happen. But, that's exactly what theatre's about."

7:22 "And the audience is needed, in this particular work. Not only is the actor exploring what it is that they're feeling and finding out what it is that they feel, but they're also embracing what it's like to be onstage, and just to stand here, and what it's like. just as a human being, to be on the hotspot, to be here onstage. And there is a new relationship then that forms with the audience for them. Instead of looking at an audience as, "Well, I'm the man at the mark and they're against me." What the gestalt work then does is to help the actor to own the space, to be comfortable up here and to understand that the audience is there for them as a support."

8:05 "So, stick with us. This is an adventure. As Betty Davis would say, "I could be bumpy. A bumpy night, but, hopefully, it will be allot of fun.""

8:17 "There are four stages of the work that you are going to witness. And you're probably wondering why my students are not around me at this moment, about what we're about to do. And the reason for that is that we call this the 'ambush' and the 'vulnerability' technique. It's always best not to know what is coming toward you so that at least I can have a jump on the work with them."

8:41 "We will go through four stages. The first one is called 'being alone onstage.' At this point you're going to witness what the actor, and how the actor works when they're alone onstage, and what they do without costumes, without sets, without lights, without anything. At this point the actor becomes aware of how it impacts them just to be onstage, how their body, how their psychology works. It's at this point that we begin to discover the masks, the masks that we carry around in life. How we as people subliminally entertain or deal with an audience or deal with being up here alone, prior to us ever getting a character. Because, much of the time, we bring that with us. Along with the character we bring our own baggage to the performance. So, that's number one."

9:28 “Number two is ‘confronting the emotional self.’” At this point you will see me asking the actor to say words. I will ask them to do strange things with their body. And what we’re about at that point is for them, this is their journey, is to go into the emotional landscape at that point and to start seeing what it is that their feeling by just standing here. And to explore, at that point that’s where we go into the emotional landscape of just exploring all different kinds of emotions.”

10:00 “The third stage is ‘employing the work’ in a monologue. The idea is: this is a process. And once we get the emotional gears going, once the emotions revved up, then I like to employ it into work. I want to see how it feels to put it into the monologue. At this point, usually, the biggest discovery for an actor is the difference between ‘performing’ and ‘acting’. And I might set up that definition right now. In my estimation, ‘acting’ is the employment of your true feelings, your true and total empathy. To quote Stanislavsky, ‘The Magic ‘IF.’” It’s not magic anymore. It’s reality. You are there. You are using yourself. ‘Performing’ is mimicking an emotion, mimicking tears or laughter or crying or total joy. But, it’s mimicking. Some acting teachers call it ‘indicating.’ I like to call it ‘performing.’ But, at this point in the gestalt work, while we have them, the actor revved up and using, open, emotionally available and working, to use the monologue with the emotions, they get for the first time what it’s like truly to act, to use themselves.”

11:17 “Stage four is the ‘validation.’ And this is where you come in. This is your role. After the work is done, then I ask for the performer then to stand and to talk with the audience members. And they tell them what it is that they saw. And it’s at this point the validation issues come forward and then they understand, “Ah, this is what I’m doing.” And, sort of a communication there, a feast with one another of what happens.”

11:47 “I’ve written some ideas down there of things to look for as we’re going through the process. And, again, I don’t want to say this in front of the actors because what they’re about

is, we want them not to be self-conscious, we don't want them to be, we just want them to understand, "This is just what I'm feeling at this point." You are the observer. We want them in the moment."

12:14 "So, without much more ado: we'll get started."

12:20 End

Workshop, Camera Left: Julie's Monologue Work

1:20 Julie starts her monologue

5:05 Julie's monologue ends

5:25 Just standing and being

7:18 Say, "Hello" to everybody

8:15 Julie gets lightheaded

9:07 "I've changed", "I'm all grown up", "I'm an adult", "I'm a mom", "Ethan shut up"

10:00 She's there: starting in on the "I need"

11:09 "I need"

12:19 "I need a drink"

13:00 "I need you"

13:22 "I'm gonna fall"

14:00 "Where were you?"

14:40 "I need"

14:50 segue into Pushing away

15:07 "I need a break" Stamping foot "Go away"

15:38 "Fuck you"

16:11 things calm back down "Fuck you"

16:38 “Alone”

16:54 “Don’t leave me” back to reaching

17:55 “I’ll be good” “We’ll have drinks” hysteria

18:14 Explosion “Fuck you”

18:24 “You raped me”

18:31 Dr.V. asks Julie to begin her monologue again

18:58 Julie starts her monologue (Dr.V. stays and directs)

22:52 Julie’s monologue ends

23:30 The validation section begins

23:50 Physically, what happened for you (she didn’t see memories, she just felt emotions)

25:25 Why was the monologue different the second time

26:43 Was it easier the second time

27:14 Julie speaks with her audience (starts the fourth part: validation)

27:40 Renee responds

29:25 James responds: Can it be healthy to do that allot? “Sure. Yes, it can. Yes, it can. The reason why, I know that it appears to be unhealthy. That’s why I gave the warning. It does appear to be unhealthy. But the idea here is, and it’s a very good question to ask, again, you know, health is about moderation, I think. It’s unhealthy, I mean, oranges are great, lots of vitamin C, will kill you, you know, you’ll have too acidic of a body, right? So, I think there’s moderation in everything. But, and also the body if, and I think I know where you’re going is, you know, is she going to go off the deep end if you do too much of this you’re going to become psychotic.”

30:48 “Interestingly enough, you will do that. If you do it too much you will emotionally shut down. And I can’t, I mean, there’s no way that I can work with someone who’s emotionally shut down. And I won’t. I mean, there’s no sense in it.”

31:12 “I know that sometimes it appears as if I’m manipulating it. But, in actuality, I’m just taking cues off her.”

31:21 Ethan responds

32:25 Ethan responds again

33:45 The audiences’ empathy for the actors events and emotions

35:00 Ethan responds again

35:35 James responds

38:45 “How can you do this and stay sane? Now every night, probably, you’re not going to be able to come to this emotional pitch. Well, then you’ve got to rely on your technique. And I’m the first acting teacher that will say, “I believe that people have to work from the inside out and the outside in.” Because one never knows where you’re going to be. But this certainly gives the actor a sense of catharsis and employment and if you can catch the wave you’re in and you don’t have to do anything. You really don’t.”

39:23 End

Workshop, Camera Left: Ethan & Renee’s Scene Work

00:17 They begin their scene

12:03 The scene ends, Dr.V. explains how directors might use the exercise to improve this scene

14:35 They discuss the scene & its given circumstances

14:14 Ethan’s gestalt work begins

16:55 Beginning with the grasping and cheek touching

17:15 “Broccoli”

17:35 Stomping and shoving and yelling

18:00 Reaching and grasping, "I don't know what I want"

18:25 "I need"

18:55 Stomping and shoving "It pisses me off" "I don't want to need you"

19:19 Reaching and grasping "'I don't know what I want" "I don't want to fuck up"

"I don't know if I'm good enough" "I can't dance" "I don't know if I'm good enough for you"

21:19 Ethan begins his monologue (Dr.V stays and directs)

24:00 Stomping and shouting "I want broccoli" "I want Guinness" "I can't dance"

24:54 "I can't have you"

25:54 "Goodbye"

26:24 "I love you"

26:50 Ethan begins his monologue again (Dr.V. stays and directs)

28:29 Renee begins with her next line

28:50 Camera pans over to Renee

29:35 Dr.V. has them face each other "Will you hold me" (Shot stays with Renee)

30:20 "I'm not good enough"

30:46 Dr.V. joins Renee, reaching and grasping) Renee breaks

32:30 Ethan joins the shot with Renee

33:20 "I will have no children"

36:20 Cut, scene over (camera right changes tapes)

36:50 Grabbing chairs and discussing how directors might use the exercise in a rehearsal situation

37:45 Ethan discusses what he discovered

43:15 Renee discusses what happened for her: "NOW I'm ready to start"

41:41 They begin the scene from the top

43:00 what does Renee do that aggravates the hell out of you

45:18 Renee leaves & they chase each other around the house
 46:33 They return and start the scene again
 49:10 Ethan drops his line and Dr.V. cuts
 49:28 Dr.V. discusses Ethan
 50:26 Audience feedback
 **51:03 James responds
 **53:20 Julie asks who chose this scene & responds
 55:40 Dr.V.: emotional availability
 57:40 Julie responds again
 59:54 Ethan responds: he couldn't let go of the given circumstances
 1:00:59 End

Workshop, Camera Left: Finishing Up Ethan & Renee's Scene Work & Dr.V's Closing Remarks

00:00 How a director can give different types of rehearsals: with and without the given circumstances
 00:23 Ethan states how he wanted to do the whole scene
 1:03 actors warming up, how the work helps
 1:40 Comments about Renee
 1:50 James responds
 **2:30 Dr.V.: peeling the onion, actor's masks, misconceptions about acting and actors, breathing life into a character
 **3:45 Choice of words in the work: transference of self into the circumstances of the character, crying lessons

6:00 Dr.V makes observations about Renee

8:45 Julie comments

10:23 Ethan comments about the chase

10:53 Dr.V: How directors can Gestalt role play

11:45 Dr.V ends their session & discusses a few things “I would like to talk briefly now, going into, and I will let all of the secrets out of the bag now about gestalt work.”

12:55 Dr.V. thanks the actors

13:07 Dr.V. begins her closing remarks: Part One:Alone Onstage, how actors react, masks

“The first part that I would like to talk about is ‘alone onstage’. I don’t talk about that in front of the actor, obviously, because I don’t want the actor to cover up or to fix or choreograph themselves because that takes them away from the work.”

13:30 “Some of the things that I did see with ‘alone onstage’ you begin to see how the actor responds to just being up here by yourself. It’s very frightening. You’re on, you know, you’re here up here by yourself. And psychologists tell us that there of the most or four of the most stressful jobs in the world: combat soldier, fifth grade teacher, actor, public speaker. Because all eyes are on you.”

14:07 “So, you see, before you get a costume on or lights or carry a character you’re bringing your own psychology to the stage.”

14:16 “And so you react. When you’re in this stressful position you react in various ways. Some people get very angry. You know, you’ll see, “OK, come at me.” Because they feel like that’s their response to the world. Or when they’re in that positions. So they tend to play allot of characters very angry. Some people want to run away. We didn’t have any runaways today. But you see this kind of veil come over and they don’t want to look out there, you know? And do this and they start going into themselves and, “See you.” You know, visually, you just see running. They’re the figdeters. Also the runners who are fixing themselves. You know, my

beauty queens or my very beautiful girls who are constantly, you know, the fixers, I call them. I'm, I have to, "Do I look good?" They're worried about appearances. And that is to them what the audience brings forth. So all of their characters sometimes tend to be perfect and so forth."

15:48 "So, first we deal with just the masks and being here. And I joke people out of it. And you show it to me physically. I'm watching what responds. Not only that, am I looking at the masks, but I'm looking at parts of your body that are not masked. For instance a hand that's doing this. This hand doesn't have a mask. It's out here going, "I'm scared." You know, it's out here doing, sometimes it's feet. You know, sometimes, like with Ethan, it's this lovely little muscle right here that begins to jerk. You know, sometimes it's eyes. Sometimes you'll see a ripple that goes through."

16:52 "There's allot that lives there and when I touch it you, "Bleggh!" All of this comes over you. So there are different parts of the body. The body maintains memory."

17:20 "So when someone say, "I have stagefright." I always say, "Great!" Because you're available. You're emotional. You know, when your hands sweat and your tongue does this, that means that you're allowing the emotion to come on out. You just have to focus it. So, the first have is for you to understand what your masks are, and let us kid you out of them and let you have the time just to stand here and realize, "It's OK, it's interesting, I don't have to go through all this mess." Right? And then you begin to feel, and I'm sure some of you did, that all of a sudden you become very focused. That the audience goes away. And it's just you and something out there. You don't see people anymore. You just become focused." "In which the audience goes away and you have total focus. And that's what we want is acceptance. That's when you have accepted the audience. You have accepted the space. You have learned, "This is mine. This is home." You know, this is home. And then you begin to go into the interior work,

your interior landscape to begin to work. So, and then you begin to know, and I begin. These are my signals, the body, and that's where I begin to work"

18:30 Part Two: Exploring the Emotional landscape "The second part: 'Exploring the emotional landscape.' I'm asking you to stand in a neutral position. We don't like to do this because it opens us up totally, you know, to the audience. And when you're in the focal point that when you're totally concentrating, and then to open the hands up like this is incredibly vulnerable. You did this first with your mommas. You did this first with the people you loved. You did this. The higher you go the more emotion will happen to you. It's sense memory. You remember doing it. Somewhere, 75% of your brain back there, your brain, you know, remembers doing this. "Pick me up." "Hold me." This is a to- because you were helpless then. You couldn't do anything for yourselves at that point. You depended upon someone to do everything for you. Right? And to ask again, totally vulnerable in front of allot of people, strips you of allot of layers. Also gets you intouch with with very young feelings. Young feelings before you got hurt, divorced, you know, dumped, whatever. What I call 'the pure feelings.' And that's why the words are very simple. "I need." "Go away." "Hold me." "I love you." These are the first things that you say. So it goes back to very pure, first emotions for you to run around in. And I begin to work physically also. You probably have noticed that I'll push knees forward."

20:10 "The hips are forward, but all of this is back. And this is a retreat. This is a retreat. So, when I ask the body to come forward like this, that's when you said, "I'm gonna fall down." And she was about five years old when she said that, didn't she? "Imma fall. Fall momma. I'll fall.'"

20:40 "You know, but it's very frightening because you begin to feel, you know, very young. It's a new place in the landscape to go. And also, I'm asking the body and the psyche to take responsibility. Now, that is a challenge, you see, because now I'm going into areas that you haven't explored. You see. And that's when it gets scary for you. And then beginning to move

through some things with anger. And I'll choose different things. Perhaps anger, we can do that. We can do "I need", you know, the vulnerable stuff. We do fun stuff with broccoli. You know. You know, the laughter, the fun, silliness. You know, sometimes I even go with the envy. I go loss."

21:35 "And so, I deal with abandonment. Sometimes I deal with jealousy. Sometimes I deal with just pure silliness which is allot of fun to deal with."

21:47 Part Three: Putting the work into the material "Then, going into the monologue. With all of you, to an extent, you wanted very badly, with all of this emotion, to still perform. You were going to perform ontop of all the emotion. Did you realize that? And then, when I said, "Ah, not to worry, just say the words this time. Do it opposite. Just say the words and allow the words to hit you. See what happens." And then you went, "Wow, this is easy. OK." And then, all of a sudden, you begin to realize, "Oh, now I'm walking the line with it. Now I'm ontop of the wave. I'm not pushing the wave. I'm riding it. I'm ontop of it. I don't have to push the emotion. I don't have to push the words. I just have to feel them. When I say them, see the imagery. When I say them, feel it." And you do. OK. And you understood the difference then. That's why we do the monologue is so you can understand the difference between performing and acting, and what that means for you."

22:52 Part Four: Validation "The last part, the validation, I think, is very important and at that point to ask you to look back at the world, to look at the people that you had looked at at the very beginning and to talk to people. Did they seem the same or did they seem different? Did you find? Usually people say that people look very different. The world around them seems very different. Colors sometimes are heightened, or they seem distant or kind of spacey. But they feel that the world looks different."

23:27 "Also, it's important to here what your colleagues have said to you. In a gestalt class, each of you would go through the gestalt work, so that each of you are in the hotseat, you

observe, and then you get up there and go through it. Everybody has a different experience.

What's good about that then is that usually after people have been through the gestalt work they say to me, "If I can cry, scream, yell, throw up, laugh like a hyenna and have a blast up here, if I can do that in front of my best friend and my worst enemy I can do anything. I can go anywhere." And they never feel the kind of fear of audience again. There is a kind of ownership, "I've paid my dues here. I understand what I'm feeling about the work." Also there's something to be said about talking about an emotional experience with someone. In which you, you know, you can do it. You begin to put words to what it is you're feeling. You can codify what it is.

You can explain it.

24:26 "So that then in your own lives when you have experiences, you begin to understand what it is that you're feeling. Then you can give that to your characters. How many times have we said, "I just don't know what it is that I'm feeling. I don't know what to say. I can't explain it." Well, then I don't know if you're going to be able to that for a character. I mean, 'cause you've got to make decisions for the character. As I said, you have to breath life into them. You have to make choices about the reactions and feelings. So then when you begin to do it in your own life you can do it for a character."

25:04 "So, it's good to talk with the audience, because you begin to to have a new perception of what your audience is about for you. And then it comes full circle. When we go back to the beginning you won't feel as likely to bring your baggage with you. "I don't have to perform for you. I don't have to entertain you. I don't have to be the intellectual with you. I don't have to be shy." All this, you don't bring the masks. Once you've seen you've been retrained to the stage you come bringing all of yourselves to us. You bring your body. You bring your mind. You bring your emotions. You bring your spirit. And to quote the gestalt works, "The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts." And so, when you are working with all of your parts, and as you could see up here you were just magnetized.

You were using the whole person, the whole performer. You're not using a machine that has one piece missing. You look at all of it."

26:08 Squirrel analogy

26:56 "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. And I believe that's the way actors are. I believe that the ugliest actors or the ugliest actor can become beautiful when using all of themselves. We're so attracted to watching the ability to bring that kind of work to the stage. And I also think it's amazing to see the kind of maturity, versatility, and strength that actors take on using this kind of work. They're not frightened of emotions. They know and can judge how far I can go, how much I can use, far of this. Because this is a part of my instrument. I refuse to abuse it."

27:42 What she thought the first time she saw this work "The first time that I saw this work, and I was a student, and I had gone to dance school and finished a BFA in professional dance and then the next year I went into acting school and I saw this I was horrified. I thought, "What have I gotten myself into? Dear Mom, there is this crazy woman who is asking us to stand up here and cry, scream, yell, and snot, and some people throw up, and we have to sit through this." And I thought, "This is insane. What is it?" 'Cause it looks horrible. And she wrote back, "School looked horrible to you when you were five. Try it." So, I was very frightened of the work when I saw it. And as a dancer I was just amazed because I began to see physically what was going on with people. And I was like, "What is this woman doing to them?" When I went through the work was proof of the pudding. Because I had no idea what I was going to do at all. I mean, it was like, "Arrgghh." And I think I was probably the most frightened. And I think I went last. I think I was the one that was at the back of the bus that kept sitting further and further and further in the back of the room. And then I went through this and my sensation was, when I walked home I wasn't walking home. I was walking on air. Because so much of a purge had happened for me. But also, what happened, too, is that I began to understand myself as a

human being. And I began to understand myself as an actress and what actors are supposed to bring to the work. And it also helped me to understand why it's important to live life to its fullest, and understanding why things happen to you in life, and why you have all these experiences, why all that is good because you will bring it to the work. And if you have this kind of gestalt work that can be used as a tool in your process you can strengthen yourself, if you will, and this is going to sound like an oxymoron, you can strengthen yourself to let go. You can strengthen yourself to use these emotions. So that you can pick and choose and truly become and artist and to use all of yourself."

29:50 Any questions

Ethan wants to know about physiology/psychology, left brain/right brain, conscious/subconscious... Dr.V responds with how the body & brain manipulate memory

32:55 Rophling "There's a technique called 'Rolphing'... This is with a deep massage therapy and these therapists have talked about it, and I've been rolphed myself, in which they're working in a deep muscle and, all of a sudden, I remember this memory of my mother when I was a kid, and my knee's hurting, and they're working on my knees. I remember dance school, "Of course you did. That's where your knees got hurt." I remember, you know, being a cheerleader and cra- and just, wearing pom-poms. But where the incident happens, where the injury is, something that you see reminds you."

34:03 She's not interested in analyzing the actor, only searching for emotions "And so, it's what we call a trigger. There's a trigger, something that makes you, you know, it's not the incident, it's just what you see. And it's the same thing with the body. So, I don't know. And it's not ours to know why, you know, you do that, because I'm not interested in psychoanalyzing you. I'm not interested in that."

34:20 "How you were expecting to see, or to experience memories or people or incidents and so forth. But you don't with this work. All you experience is what you're feeling in the moment,

just this well of emotions that live within you all the time. Even though they're not coming out, or their not triggered, you know, they're within you."

34:40 the stage mother in your brain, empowerment of the actor "And that's very empowering for an actor, I think, to know. Because sometimes, you know, that stage mother in your brain jumps up and says, "OK, I've got to cry in five lines." But you're outside of the moment there. Or, "I've got to be hysterically frightened at this moment." Stage mom again. Where as, all you have to do is, perhaps, be intouch with something within you. See something. Smell something. Know that and connect with that. And that's it. But it's within you always. You don't have to go out there and get it or 'rev up' for it within this."

35:20 She doesn't believe in actors and directors who concentrate on squeezing memories "I don't believe in directors and other actors that try to psychoanalyze one another or pull out your history or people or-"

35:42 "You take one step back, now you're also dealing with the- you're another step back. You know, you're moving further and further and further out of the scene, as opposed to into the scene."

35:56 We rehearse everything but don't exercise emotions "We rehearse blocking until we get it down. We rehearse dance steps until we have them right onbeat. We rehearse, you know, all of this. But we refuse, it seems, sometimes, to have the courage to say, "OK,... I'm going to rehearse my magic IF. You are my long lost love. That is my child that I will never have with you." And if you open yourself up to that idea and convince yourself that, as you used to do when you were five when you said, "I'm Cowboy Bob." You know, and you believed it, didn't you? I'm sure some of you had imaginary friends. I'm sure you could see them. You, you know, you had outfits and the whole nine yards. And these were things you believed in. That your doll-babies were your babies. And your fort was, you know, your fort and your gun battles

were real for you. You know, so there's, trying to get back to that consciousness. And I believe this work helps actors to do that.”

37:10 End

APPENDIX E

PAPER EDIT

13:00 Or. V3 "I would hope for a world in which we can use all of ourselves. In which we can use, not only the body and the voice, but we are using our emotions too."

Renee's First Interview

9:58-10:15

10:24 "It's an exercise. It helps you get to the product."

13:15 "So, somebody's up there, all by themselves, standing, and we're all looking at them, you know, and she says, "Go away."

15:29 9:56 is, that's, I know how to get to that now." Because how can you openly weep onstage if you can't openly weep in life?" It's an exercise to teach you where these emotions lie and that you are capable of them. And I'd like to be able to do that. A comment Dr. Vincent

19:29 "I didn't know anything. She stripped me of everything. That method showed me that I didn't know anything."

11:36 How it was introduced to him "Here's this gung-ho acting teacher and she's just ready to show us everything."

10:52 How it was introduced to her, past tense description of exercise's process (good)

11:38 "Puts us onstage, on at a time, and begins to ask us questions, and these questions are becoming very personal."

18:03 "And once she has you there, then there's words that she wants you to add to it: Go Away."

8:05 "So, stick with us. This is an adventure. As Betty Davis would say, "I could be bumpy. A bumpy night, but, hopefully, it will be a lot of fun."

17:25 "She might find that memory, and once she knows she's found it, then she goes further with it. Then she's got to pull it out of you."

~~present as a potential risk in the first place.~~ You've opened up yourself a whole can of worms there and you don't want a can worms. "For control and safety's sake, worms are bad."

12:14 "So, without much more ado: we'll get started."

12:20 End

12:27 "I think that it is arguable to day that many people do not understand the amount of work and craft that goes into acting because we want it to seem easy. We want it to seem effortless. I mean, let's face the fact, we don't go to the theatre to see the balarina sweat. We go to the theatre to see the balarina float and fly. But up underneath all of that she's hurting, and her toes are hurting, and yes, she is sweating, and her muscles are exerting tremendous energy, and she would really probably love to scream and yell at times. But we don't go to see her sweat. We go to see her fly and float. And it is the same with actors."

13:33 "And the same thing is true for being able to work on your emotions, to be able to give that to a character. So, in this sense there's a paradigm shift in this, in which we believe it's all smoke and mirrors. But, in actuality, it's a lot of hard work that the actor is

13:33 doing to be able to present a character so effortlessly onscreen. But, in a sense, because they do it so easily, we believe we could all be actors. We can all do it. It's very simple: just watch enough tv."

3:39 What is this thing she does "This thing she does, it's called gestalt techniques, it's a type of psychology, I've never really seen it done in combination with acting before, to where you become aware of your blocks and your emotional suppressions and allow your self to exercise and have those emotions, to free up any kind of blocks that keep you from expressing them or experiencing them."

5:13 Is the gestalt an extension of method acting "A loose extension of method acting is what I'd call this exercise." "To call it an extension of method acting is sort of putting it out of its place. I think it's an extension of psychology. But it can be added to method acting as a supplement, let's call it, to method acting, rather than an extension of."

7:44 Is it a tool of method acting "This exercise is definitely a tool of method acting. It becomes a catalyst for you. You know, there are so many different tactics in which to get what you want, to reach an objective, but this is one way to be able to make that connection physically."

4:20 Is the gestalt exercise an extension of method acting "In a way, yes, they seem to go hand in hand. they- method acting insists that you have these emotions, that you experience them and not just show what would happen if you had- if you were having an emotion. And gestalt is what causes you to free them, to let you, lets yourself experience them. So I think they really do, it seem like a natural combination."

3:15 What is this thing she does, emotional warm up "It is, the best way that I can describe it is, you do vocal warm ups to warm up your voice and get it to where you've got your full range, you do physical warm ups to make sure you don't pull any muscles when you try to do the splits onstage, and you have emotional warm ups to make sure your don't emotionally harm yourself when you go in and try to do some... it's an emotional warm up is how I would describe it."

~~you and produce an emotion.~~ If you go into it with the right attitude I'm sure that- this repetition, this simple physical acts of touch, making you combine your emotions with your verbal and your physical and realizing it's all one. I suppose it does produce the desired result, it causes you to release to let go of the tension and actually let yourself feel."

41:40 Emotional practice "It's emotional practice is what it is in it's, you know, basic sense. In it's basic sense you're practicing feeling emotions. And the more you practice the better you're going to be at it."

19:24 How she gestalts herself 20:46 "I make it happen for me. And then I've got it physically, I start it emotionally, and then the language can just flow out. Maybe it's crying, maybe it's something else, but whatever the emotion is I can make it happen for me through this method."

Julie's First Interview
1:52 Julie introduces herself
2:29 Fort Worth Shakespeare In The Park

Julie's Second Interview
1:56 Julie introduces herself

Renee's Second Interview
1:54 Renee introduces herself
2:45 Renee introduces herself (better sound)

Ethan's First Interview
00:31 Ethan introduces himself

Ethan's Second Interview
00:30 Ethan introduces himself
00:48 Ethan introduces himself

Dr. V's Interview, Part One, Camera Right
00:29 Dr. V introduces herself

Workshop, Camera Left: Introduction
00:50 Start, Dr. V. introduces herself and the subject

The Play 15:

J1

R2

R2

E1

E2

3:36 "I began to find that there was no real methodology for helping young actors to arrest what happens emotionally with a character. In colleges, in universities, in conservatories we really have covered the gambit voice workshops and body workshops and script workshops and improvisations and style. But we don't go anywhere near, "How do I create this character emotionally?" In the western culture, in the united states, if we, it even breathes psychology or analyst we immediately believe, "Well, what's wrong with you?" Acting teachers run from the idea that perhaps we have to deal with the emotional life of an actor or even get near a character. But, indeed, that's what makes the performing arts so alive is the immediacy of what the performer is feeling onstage and we get to witness that. But the work never goes anywhere near it.

14:13 And I think it's very clear, not only to the laymen but to the professional, when you're watching performances... you can see the use of self. You can see the soul that's working there. You can see that they're employing a great deal of themselves. Whereas sometimes, I think, in other methodologies, not in all of them, but in some, you don't get the depth of performance.

And it's simply because the actor is not willing to really us their fears, their hurts, their joys, their wonderful remembrances as a child. It gets too, what we call, "Close to home" for them so they move away from that. And what happens is that, you know, and I'll clarify this now, you get an actor that has been 'performing' emotions or 'mimicking' the performance, 'mimicking' the situation, as opposed to really feeling it and really giving life to the character. So then we have what I differentiate the difference between 'acting' and 'performing'."

1:54 "It was introduced to me in the late seventies when I was working on my Master's at SMU. It was taught to me by an acting professor there. She had done work at the neighborhood playhouse and on Broadway and had learned the technique in New York

1:54 and came to SMU and I studied with her for a year. I went through the gestalt work myself with twelve other colleagues and then the next semester we did scene work with her for an entire semester in which we employed the gestalt methodology into scene work."

The Arghh

Q.2.115

Dr. V. I

~~ceasing together for me.~~ And I could see what it was that she was doing with each of my classmates. I studied with her for a year, and watched, and I was gestalted twice. And then watched my classmates in the work for a year, and saw incredible differences in our ability to flesh out characters. And, also, I thought, a sense of wisdom that occurred for all of us, in that we were emotionally much more mature, wise. And we had this sense of knowing and understanding ourselves. All of a sudden the work gave us a sense of strength and maturity. And, almost as if our emotions were a tool for us now. Just like our bodies, just like our voices, these were the canvases, the tools that actors use. ~~And all of a sudden it wasn't sort of a wishy-washy, ambivalent thing that we were working with. That our emotional lives were tools that we could explore and use and give to characters.~~

38:27

Dr. V. 2

~~And it brought me closer in. And from that blocking but I'm rehearsing my emotions too. I'm working the magic 'IF' that Stanislavsky talks about. The magic 'IF' is: 'If I were this person, is if were in this situation'. To bring as close as I can to the given circumstances and emotions that this character is going through. To employ extreme empathy."~~

39:47 "And I began to find that directors were thankful. Because they didn't want to have to deal with improves that dealt with emotions or, and they didn't know. And they were thankful, because it makes, I'm doing the work myself. And I was becoming more and more independent. And my fellow actors would become fascinated by the fact that I could, indeed, quote, 'connect' emotionally to their needs. ~~And, it's not only just tears or anger,~~

Dr. V. 2

16:25 What is this thing you do "What is this madness? Gestalt work for the actor is, in its best terms, an avenue and a technique for the actor to be able to explore their emotional life. It also incorporates a lot of benefits out of that. The gestalt work helps the actor to understand how just being onstage impacts him or her. Just being onstage without a character at all. What the impact is of being on the stage as a human being, what that's about. The work also then helps the actor to understand their range of emotions, and in understanding what masks they have developed to be able to cope with being onstage and in life. How the masks that we use, and to define mask: many people use the mask of their profession to face the world, "I'm a professor." Or, you know, "I'm an artist." Or,

4:07 Why, warmed up emotionally, emotional stretching, scales "Why she does this seems to be, my understanding is to get you warmed up emotionally. As an actor you're moving around onstage, you're speaking, and you're supposed to be feeling emotions, particularly if you are a method actor. So, for the movement you do physical warm ups, such as stretching, things like that, exercise, just to get the blood, you know, flowing. For your voice you do vocal warm ups, maybe some singing exercises, and you sort of go through your scales vocally. And emotionally, this gestalt thing that she does is sort of, it's to warm up your emotions and sort of an emotional stretching or an emotional scales. It compares that way in a - it compares to the stretching in a physical sense and the scales in a vocal sense. It's just to warm up your emotions, a warm up exercise."

11:12 The constructive use of emotions, a work out, building emotional muscles "Yes, and the exploration of them. And it's flexing muscles, it's a work out for the emotions. If an actor never has the ability to explore his or her emotional world in a safe space they cannot do it onstage. You can't expect a runner to just get up, without warming up stretching and being conditioned over a year's worth of time, to be able to get up and run an 80k race. They can't do it. They simply cannot do it. And it's unfair to ask the actor to be able to do it."

35:56 We rehearse everything but don't exercise emotions "We rehearse blocking until we get it down. We rehearse dance steps until we have them right on beat. We rehearse, you know, all of this. But we refuse, it seems, sometimes, to have the courage to say, "Ok, I'm going to rehearse my magic IF. You are my long lost love. That is my child that I will never have with you." And if you open yourself up to that idea and convince yourself that, as you used to do when you were five when you said, "I'm Cowboy Bob." You know, and

Handwritten notes at the top of the page: "Handwritten notes" and "in the method".

Handwritten note: "16:25".

Handwritten note: "4:07".

Handwritten note: "11:12".

Handwritten note: "35:56".

Handwritten note: "16:25".

5:04 "A lot of actors can't. They can't bring themselves to the material. They can't feel the empathy. And the director feels inept or unable to bring them there. So this is another tool to be able to help the actor to feel the moment. And from being able to feel the moment brings catharsis. And that's probably one of the most empowering things for an actor to have."

35:14 "Like musical scales, I guess. I kind of like that. I'm going to use that one. Musical scales. Scales. Is that what they're called? That's what I thought. Not like justice scales, but musical scales."

31:56 Emotional scales "Yes. Yeah. You could liken this to emotional scales. That, the gestalt work is practicing your emotional scales. You're going through different colors and rhythms and hitting notes. Yes, it could be, that's a good metaphor."

32:33 End

14:13 What the actor brings (personally, emotionally) to the character, employing themselves in the role, the use of self "I think it's use of self. I think that, bottom line, method acting, to me and to my students and to my colleagues that I've worked professionally with, there's a sense of satisfaction for the artist to be able to employ themselves, their life histories, their, what they've experienced, what they've learned, their pains, their gains, and their feelings about life and experiences and their passions. And being able to utilize that, being able, just like a visual artist to use different colors, the actor has the ability then to employ different emotions, different life experiences. And having, and this is where the gestalt work comes in, the courage and the strength and the wisdom to be able to use themselves to use of themselves."

4:38 "So, what the gestalt work is about is to help the actor to explore their emotional landscape. It is not designed to psychoanalyze you or to bring up your past or any of that. But it's, that is for you. Those are your memories. But what it is about is to create a safe space in which you can explore who and what you are and what you feel. And, hopefully, to be able to give those feelings to the character. So, in general, that's what it's about."

5/10 "A word of warning: what you're about to see today in this process, and I'll explain a little about the process in a moment, can be very exciting. It can be very frightening at times, because we are dealing with raw human emotion. Sometimes I have had students to say, 'This is very difficult to watch.' Well, arguments are hard to watch. Sometimes it's

5:10 sometimes this is very difficult to watch. Sometimes there are some emotions that are hard: anger, for instance, or jealousy or whatever. And it's difficult to watch that. But, at the same time, the catharsis that happens for the actor, and the understanding, is wonderful."

7:00 "But, indeed, so, I warn you: sometimes there's strong language, that I ask the actors to say, and sometimes gestures that might be offensive to an audience's sensibilities. So, I ask you to be adventuresome with us in where we go, because I never know what will happen. But, that's exactly what theatre's about."

W5-14-10

W5-14-10

W5-14-10

5:58 Steps and stages of the exercise "What Dr. Vincent is going to do, if she does it the same way that she did it before, is she'll take a single person, let's say me, and she'll stand me up, get me on my feet, actually on my feet in front of whoever's there."

13:23 Stages & steps of the exercise "She would stand us up alone with the class watching. She'd stand us up onstage and say to just breath, just relax. And we'd stand there for a moment, eyes boring holes into us from our fellow peers."

59:05 Isolation in front of the group 59:09 "I learned this From Dr. Vincent. That the first thing that I do in starting this method is have the student, and she did this with me, just stand there. Isolated. To stand there isolated."

8:41 "We will go through four stages. The first one is called 'being alone onstage.' At this point you're going to witness what the actor, and how the actor works when they're alone onstage, and what they do without costumes, without sets, without lights, without anything. At this point the actor becomes aware of how it impacts them just to be onstage, how their body, how their psychology works. It's at this point that we begin to discover the masks, the masks that we carry around in life. How we as people subliminally entertain or deal with an audience or deal with being up here alone, prior to us ever getting a character. Because, much of the time, we bring that with us. Along with the character we bring outown baggage to the performance. So, that's number one."

8:17 "There are four stages of the work that you are going to witness. And you're probably wondering why my students are not around me at this moment, about what we're about to do. And the reason for that is that we call this the 'ambush' and the 'vulnerability' technique. It's always best not to know what is coming toward you so that at least I can have a jump on the work with them."

exercise) "I explain to them the process. I explain to them the history of gestalt, of psychotherapy, how it relates to acting, how this is going to be used if they choose to use it to, as a tool for their emotional work with characters and in plays and so forth. And after that I don't tell them much more. It's important that they don't know too much, because actors are famous for fixing things. If I tell them, 'You're going to respond in 'A, B, or C manner.' They will try to do just the opposite. You tend to be children about these things."

WS Final
13:07 Dr. V. begins her closing remarks: Part One: Alone Onstage, how actors react, masks
"The first part that I would like to talk about is 'alone-onstage'. I don't talk about that

WS Final 13:07 Infront of the actor, obviously, because I don't want the actor to cover up or to fix or
choreograph themselves because that takes them away from the work."

E2 6:59 ~~anything like that. I think that may be an important part of the exercise is to actually be~~
~~infront of people feeling your emotions. She'll have me stand perfectly still, you know, not~~
~~frozen but, just, you know still, centered, which just sort of means prepared and ready to~~
~~do whatever it is I'm supposed to do. Focused. And she'll ask me to probably say a short~~

25:22 Thoroughly explain the procedure, 4 parts "The procedure is in four parts. To begin
with, the professor asks the student to stand on the stage by themselves and to just, to see
what happens. Also I ask that, I have the students or the audience sit in the front row and
close. And the first part is literally to address how the student feels onstage without a
character, without costumes, lights, anything. Just how it impacts them and just to stand
there. That is the introduction. And also they acknowledge the audience. They see them.
They look at them. And they experience what happens with them, and a variety of things
do. This is where we begin to the masks appear, of, "How do I stand here naked infront of
people. What are my natural reactions?" And just go through them and explore what
happens to them."

Dr. V. 10:34
hotseat. You are the total focus of everyone's attention. And, actually, it's even worse,
because you don't have a costume, you don't have lights, you don't have darkness. You
know, you can see their faces. And after awhile, once you're just standing there I begin to
see how they subtly reacting to the situation. And usually what they will do, what the
person does, is that they pull out what I call 'tricks'. Or: 'The for-sure way of how I'm
going to deal with a stressful situation.' Some people get angry. Some people start making
jokes. Some people tap dancing around and begin entertaining us. You know, being the
class clown. Some people run. You begin to see this kind of veil that goes over their eyes.
And what we call, "Deer in headlights." Which we see actors do all the time. All of a

The Body Politic

10:31 sudden, "Oh, my god." And that's that kind of sheer out there terror. But sometimes there's another kind of terror that happens when you see this veil appear over people in which you can see them withdraw into themselves and they want to hide."

13:30 "Some of the things that I did see with 'alone onstage' you begin to see how the actor responds to just being up here by yourself. It's very frightening. You're on, you know, you're here up here by yourself."

24:25 usually feeling is, well, some nervousness, 'cause you're standing in front of people, at least we were standing in front of a big group of people. And you know what they're thinking. You know what you were thinking when they were standing in front of you. And

14:16 "And so you react. When you're in this stressful position you react in various ways. Some people get very angry. You know, you'll see, "Ok, come at me." Because they feel like that's their response to the world. Or when they're in that positions. So they tend to play a lot of characters very angry. Some people want to run away. We didn't have any runaways today. But you see this kind of viel come over and they don't want to look out there, you know? And do this and they start going into themselves and, "See you." You know, visually, you just see running. They're the figeters. Also the runners who are fixing themselves. You know, my beauty queens or my very beautiful girls who are constantly, you know, the fixers, I call them. I'm, I have to, "Do I look good?" They're worried about appearances. And that is to them what the audience brings forth. So all of their characters sometimes tend to be perfect and so forth."

51 10:30 be subtle. But you repeat this. She sees where your physical blocks are, where you're tightening, where you're keeping your energy, and she'll touch it lightly just to make you aware, 'cause it's all about awareness, being aware of where you're blocking out your emotions, where you're hiding everything. Mine was always in my neck and shoulders. I would tense up, my shoulders would touch my ears, practically. And she would just lightly tap it so that you would become aware, and you would start to let go, and she would try to push down to make your muscles relax. And that's when usually some onslaught or flow of emotions could come out because you- It's all one, your mind, your body, your spirit. And once your body starts to relax, your emotions come out, all these things you've been trying to suppress and hide start to rise to the surface."

12:00 stomach, or so forth. When you're doing this work also with the emotions when you're standing, as I call, "Totally vulnerable" onstage by yourself, and you begin to do the work you begin to see that the body begins to respond in different ways. Stagefright is one of the best examples of the body responding. Some people get very sweaty palms, or their stomach hurts, or their mouth becomes very dry. Is a physical response to it. And you can also see injuries that people have had. Perhaps athletes, they favor a knee or not a knee, or when they get nervous the begin to pop it. The popping of knuckles is the same way. And what we like to say is that emotion and memory lies within those areas. And that if we begin to work on those areas that it does trigger emotion and sometimes that is when a block will disappear, an emotional block. Or, sometimes that's, you know, your protection against the world is there with it. I think that, in a very pedestrian manner, for example, people know that memory lies within their body."

12:00 Instructor needs to be sensitive "What is good for the practitioner at this point is to be sensitive and intuitive to what is happening to the student in the moment. And that work is done by really watching their body. Watching, and, if you will, if I can use this esoteric idea, seeing where their mind is going. Seeing what's happening to their spirit. The body will tell you. You will see at times where people's hands will begin shaking."

12:00 ~~totally to the left~~ What's happening there is the subconscious is manipulating the body in such a way. And that's my cue as the practitioner. And I begin trying to put the body back into neutral. And when I do that, that elicits another emotion that springs back to the subconscious of, "Oh, no it's out of, she's got control. She has control. Not me." So, it's vulnerable again. That creates another emotion of, perhaps a control issue might pop up. You see some actors that have lots of control issues."

52
5:26 Describe the steps and stages of the exercise "First you asked to stand and become aware of your physical being, where your tensions is, where your blocks are. She will touch certain parts of your body that seem to be tense or, I don't know, unnatural. If you look like, your stance, there's some kind of block, there's some kind of, you know, when someone gets tense their shoulder tend to rise up to their ears, or they stand a certain awkward way because they're holding tension. You simply become aware. She touches these places and says "Look, these are where your blocks are." And once you, I guess, try to adjust yourself to it, she'll repeat very vague little sayings."

15:48 "So, first we deal with just the masks and being here. And I joke people out of it. And you show it to me physically. I'm watching what responds. Not only that, am I looking at the masks, but I'm looking at parts of your body that are not masked. For instance a hand that's doing this. This hand doesn't have a mask. It's out here going, "I'm scared." You know, it's out here doing, sometimes it's feet. You know, sometimes, like

10:07 Isolation "That is just being by themselves. And it's miraculous to me how, again, in all of the training with conservatories and schools and universities we do so much work on script analysis, and the body and the voice, and this and styles, but again, no one really looks at how just standing on the stage by yourself will impact you. That's it."

3:50 How it was introduced to him, describes steps & stages "Just standing and being in front of people, and not knowing what the hell was going on, basically. It was a disarming exercise, or it was intended to be."

59:50 "And then, you know, I want to laugh, I want to smile." 1:00:04 "But, it does start with isolation. And I think that's very effective."

14:53 "It's important in a gestalt work at that point, you know, that they understand, this is where you, the actor meets his masks. These are things he puts on in society. And, unfortunately, you'll put them on onstage. And sometimes they, his own masks get in the way of the character and that sometimes produces performances out of actors that are all the same. You see the same, you know, performance out of the actor over and over and over again because they're using their own masks. Sometimes that becomes blocks too. They can't get beyond that."

34:54 Empowerment: the strength to be vulnerable "it sounds like and oxymoron, doesn't it? 'The strength to be vulnerable.' It's an oxymoron, but it's the truth. Again, emotions are muscles that in this society we don't use. And we begin to fear it from the times we're really small. 'Boys don't cry.' 'Girls are quiet.' 'Sit down.' And then your peers begin to work on you in your teenage years. What's cool. You know, how to talk. How to dress. How to walk. What to think. How to look bored. How to be all of these things. There's an amazing box that human beings, and in particularly actors, get put into. And then you walk into a career that says, 'Ok, on take two, hit your mark and cry.' 'But, I've been practicing all these years how not to.' Right? Or, how to laugh hysterically on take three. So in this sense the gestalt work helps the actor to get to it. And also, it takes an amount of strength, I think, to show an audience that side of yourself. Or, in another sense, to give these emotions to a character. To give vulnerability, emotional vulnerability to a character puts you on the line, opens you up. And that's very frightening to people. To become emotionally vulnerable."

4:53 What is this thing she does "She tries to break down the energy blocks you have. I used to complain because I spent several years building these absolutely wonderful walls and masks that I didn't let anyone behind. And the whole point is to break down those walls and masks and tap into your true emotions. Not necessarily discussing them or finding out what the source is but to find the emotions. Because if you can't express an emotions in real life, how can you express it onstage?"

Masks

Don 2

Don 1

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33:05 Emotional blocks, training emotional muscles, control "And the gestalt work helps to break down, perhaps, the blocks in the body that are preventing us from experiencing those emotions again, or experiencing those joys again, or, perhaps, just validating the fact that we can do it. It's almost like taking an athlete back into training. You know, you can run like this. You just have to start slowly, and in a safe spot, do your correct warm ups, eat the right food, and begin moving, and in this manner, then you can run a mile. And it's the same thing emotionally. You know, our emotions are nothing more than muscles.

25:20 Peeling the onion "Dr. Vincent called it 'Peeling the onion'. Peeling the onion. Take it layer by layer by layer. And when we get to the core of it that's where we're supposed to be. And for a lot of people, I think that's helpful for them, whether they want

upset, there's always something wrong, they're always needing sympathy. These are masks. This is how we cope with the world or how we present ourselves to the world. And the more complicated and creative the human being, the more masks."

18:40 "So the work helps them so see who they are and the masks that they're using. It also gives them a safe space to be able to explore then without the mask. Just to see who they are. And to identify, also, their weaknesses and their strengths. Their will be some emotions that are outside of their comfort zone, that they're asked to deal with and to explore. And there are some that they already know and can and it's a celebration. It also empowers, I think, the performer to realize that the audience is not a judgemental body. That the audience is there to enjoy them and to share with them and that they're a support group. There are a lot of long term benefits out of it too. Basically, one of the mottos or

18:34 Goal of exercise "It's to teach us to emote. Because we have spent so many years trying to be socially correct and not be upset about things and let things affect us. Well, the whole purpose of this exercise, I believe, is to teach you how to let things affect you. Teach you how to have an emotion."

15:38 "But it's important at that time just standing onstage, just looking at people that we explore what, and the actor is confronted with their own masks. And this is where they understand, and this is a term we'll use later on, 'peeling of the onion', they begin to see how many skins that they have out there layered on, and different tricks that they've done. So they come in contact with that. And I help them gently to peel them off. And to begin to laugh at them, to look at them. And so that, what we have, of to shed them. What we have then is just a vulnerable actor at that point, who is now ready to deal with themselves, who they really are. And that's probably one of the most powerful elements of the gestalt work is that you are no longer dealing with social masks, you are no longer dealing with all of that stuff. You are dealing with just you. You are dealing with your emotions your thoughts your feelings. And it's a delicious time for an actor because rarely are we given that opportunity to explore the insides of ourselves.

17:20 "So when someone say, 'I have stagefright.' I always say, 'Great!' Because you're available. You're emotional. You know, when your hands sweat and your tongue does this, that means that you're allowing the emotion to come on out. You just have to focus it. So, the first have is for you to understand what your masks are, and let us kid you out of them and let you have the time just to stand here and realize, 'It's ok, it's interesting, I don't have to go through all this mess.' Right? And then you begin to feel, and I'm sure some of you did, that all of a sudden you become very focused. That the audience goes away. And it's just you and something out there. You don't see people anymore. You just become focused." "In which the audience goes away and you have total focus. And that's what we want is acceptance. That's when you have accepted the audience. You have accepted the space. You have learned, 'This is mine. This is home.' You know, this is home. And then you begin to go into the interior work, your interior landscape to begin to work. So, and then you begin to know, and I begin. These are my signals, the body, and that's where I begin to work"

D.G.V.2

1/2/21

23:27 "Also, it's important to here what your colleagues have said to you. In a gestalt class, each of you would go through the gestalt work, so that each of you are in the hotseat, you observe, and then you get up there and go through it. Everybody has a different experience. What's good about that then is that usually after people have been through the gestalt work they say to me, "If I can cry, scream, yell, throw up, laugh like a hyenna and have a blast up here, if I can do that in front of my best friend and my worst enemy I can do anything. I can go anywhere." And they never feel the kind of fear of audience again. There is a kind of ownership, "I've paid my dues here. I understand what I'm feeling about the work." ~~Also there's something to be said about talking about an emotional experience with someone. In which you, you know, you can do it. You begin to put words to what it is you're feeling. You can codify what it is. You can explain it.~~

~~**39:20 Does it work better with a group "I think the gestalt work is meant to have a group there with you. It's meant to have. Because, when you're doing the work, it's so audience oriented also, and it's trust, it's learning, an actor learns through the gestalt work to trust themselves, trust their emotions, trust and have confidence in that.~~

48:10 Peer group or no peer group "I believe that having your peers, having the other people that are going through the process with you, is healthy. That's more comradery, more assurance that they're on your side and they want to see you succeed as much as you do."

~~31:37 "There's such a vulnerability to it. I'm giving you my life. You know, love me, trust me. The audience is very important. Either be there for you or just not be there."~~

~~32 And what I find is, again, that after the person does that they project this kind of confidence onto the audience. When they're performing from that point on they begin to project that kind of support to them. And I talk about, at that point, after they've gone~~

Grady

Dr. V. 13

Dr. V. 13

Dr. V. 13

Dr. V. 13

Dr. V. 13

40:49 Audience vs. no audience, vulnerability & support. "As an actress, if I'm in an acting class, and I have built trust with the group around me, I really want that group to be there. I want them to share that with me. I want to be able to be gestalted, that would be great. You know do this thing for me what ever you do, an the people around me can share this with me. And I think that's a beautiful thing. But if I don't know those people, I don't

And also you see that, another fringe benefit of the work is that the actor is no longer frightened of the audience. They're not guarded about the audience. Because I've redefined the audience for them. The work has redefined them. They're supporting. They're there. And they've seen the worst of you. You know? And usually, the best and the worst comes out of you in the gestalt work. And if you have done that in front of a colleague, a peer, you can do anything in front of an audience. And so there is this confidence measure that begins to

49:14 "At least with your peers there you're like, "They got my back." They're going through this too."

7:22 "And the audience is needed, in this particular work. Not only is the actor exploring what it is that they're feeling and finding out what it is that they feel, but they're also embracing what it's like to be onstage, and just to stand here, and what it's like. just as a human being, to be on the hotspot, to be here onstage. And there is a new relationship then that forms with the audience for them. Instead of looking at an audience as, "Well,

7:47 I'm the man at the mark and they're against me." What the gestalt work then does is to help the actor to own the space, to be comfortable up here and to understand that the audience is there for them as a support."

26:24 "The second part. We begin to work with the emotions that come out. And because you're standing there and dealing with that, obviously, emotions begins to move the body. So, the second half of it is to begin to explore what it is that the actor is feeling and to allow that. What we don't realize in everyday life, pedestrian life, is that emotions come up all the time and we squash them, we push them down. In that situation, in the second part of this, we allow them to come up. And it's done in several ways. It's done physically, and it's done through word association that I will give the person. And then we explore it. We explore then a range of emotions, from being mad to anger to joy to love to need, and also at the same time becoming vulnerable and becoming allright with that."

And then she would do this other step where she would come up on the stage then and she would start touching us right here is that's where she felt like the emotion was coming from. Or right here, maybe that would make us laugh because that was underneath what I'm feeling

16:52 "There's a lot that lives there and when I touch it you, 'Bleghh!' All of this comes over you. So there are different parts of the body. The body maintains memory."

We'd relax and then she'd start in with making us aware where our tension was: slight touches on the side of the cheek. That's one of my personal favorites where she'd rub the side of your cheek. With our shoulders she'd push down if she felt tension there. In our arms or legs she'd just touch to make us aware.

And to ask again, totally vulnerable in front of a lot of people, strips you of a lot of layers. Also gets you in touch with with very young feelings. Young feelings before you got hurt, divorced, you know, dumped, whatever. What I call 'the pure feelings.' And that's why the words are very simple. "I need." "Go away." "Hold me." "I love you." These are the first things that you say. So it goes back to very pure, first emotions for you to run around in. And I begin to work physically also. You probably have noticed that I'll push knees forward."

Part 2

12:45-11:55

15:45-16:00

13:23-13:50

18:30-19:00

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16

18

Well that's when she starts getting closer. She starts getting into your personal space. That's when she starts doing this sort of thing. Maybe it's at the eye. Maybe when she walked up to that stage, or she took me right through that emotion, it got me to the point where the tears are right there, but if she stops now they won't come out, but if she goes like this, they'll start. Or this, I might laugh."

9:28 "Number two is 'confronting the emotional self.' At this point you will see me asking the actor to say words. I will ask them to do strange things with their body. And what we're about at that point is for them, this is their journey, is to go into the emotional landscape at that point and to start seeing what it is that their feeling by just standing here. And to explore, at that point that's where we go into the emotional landscape of just exploring all different kinds of emotions."

11:59 "And she starts asking us these questions. She starts asking us to do things physically once she reaches just the right part of what she's looking for, that button she's trying to push. And she finds it, and then she starts to move into it physically, asking us to throw things away, and asking us to reach for things."

And then she would make some suggestion, make some small phrase, some vague general phrase, "I need", and make us do a movement with it, a non-verbal exercise of sorts that we would repeat

It might be, "I love you." That's what she saw. "You hurt me" "Leave me alone" "Come back" "Why have you caused me pain" "Help me"

18:48 "I need, I need"

phrase such as, "Go away." Along with that phrase, she'll ask me to, and she'll, what she usually does is she demonstrates it. She'll say the phrase that she wants you to say and she'll do a short, little movement along with the phrase that she wants you to do. When she did, "Go away" she would do a hand motion. So it'd be like, "Go away." And then she'll look at you and that's your cue to do that, "Go away."

17:43 "She might have you just push it out of yourself, physically with your body. She might have you stomp it out of yourself"

51
9:44 "You get these prompts of 'Go away' or 'I need' or 'I want' and you convince yourself that Dr. Vincent has been talking with all of your professors or going through your file in order to find out what kind of trauma you've had in your life. And she's teasing it, pointing at it.

Dr. V 24:37
subconscious mind. And the words are chosen very carefully. Such words as, "I need." And they're always open ended. A key phrase is, "I need." Another one is, "Go away." "I like you." "I love you." "I hate you." Sometimes, depending upon where the actor, and those are the basics, and that's sort of the testing waters for me to be able to see where we are going to day. The words elicit an emotion and a thought. Sometimes it's just pure emotion and they don't see an incident or a person in their brain. And that's fine. That's what we want. And sometimes they do. Sometimes they do see someone or an incident they, not quite resolved yet, not quite, you know, or are frightened of. Or, sometimes, it's one that's hysterically funny. Or a very young emotion. Who knows? But, nonetheless the

52
6:15 Universal sayings "Things that don't necessarily mean anything to anyone else out of context, but you but them in your own context. You, she'll say, "I need" and you create in yourself what this "I need" means. And then there are simple gestures that go along with it, that combine the emotions, the physical, the verbal mantra that you're chanting with these slight movements, these gestures, like moving your hands like this when you said, "I need," or pushing away when you say, "Go away." These tend to go with the phrase that she's using. But simple little gesture that you repeat over and over again."

1:01:01
do it for himself. But if the actor can- yeah it's a very common thing, a universal phrase. Ok, "Go away." All right, she's asking me to tell somebody to go away, tell something to go away. I was telling her to go away. You know. So it could have been anything. It may not be what she thought it was going to be, but it was something."

1:01:31 End

51
45:47 Who are you saying "go away" to "It's a fortune cookie. It fits into whatever context you so choose. So if you choosing to tell your peers that are watching you, "Go away," as they're boring the holes through your head, staring at you, judging every move you make, then that's your prerogative. If not then your saying it to some scary monster that used to scare you as a child. It's whatever. That's the best part about it, is that it's so vague you can make it into whatever you is appropriate for you. It's universal. It's a fortune cookie. It's a horror scope."

Dr. V 4

35:55 kicking forward. Because there's no one there. There's no one standing in front of you yelling at you, or smiling at you, or saying, "Hello," or any of that. We're dealing within your imagination."

J1

8:45 What she knows about it, what happens: motions, phrases, procedures, emotions, process, purpose, goals. ~~"There were physical and verbal prompts. She would have you do these physical, non-verbal motions, repetitive. She would make very vague suggestions. Things like, 'I need' or 'I want' or 'Good girl' or 'Go away', things that to the audience watching, they didn't know how they would affect you or why they were affecting you. But to you it's like looking at your horseshoe. You can change it to match your life however, you can make it appropriate."~~

Dr. V 2

50, it's bi-polar, and that's the reasoning for it. The words too are weighted. The words that we talk about, "I need." And it's open-ended. The person within their own mind fills in whatever it is. And sometimes, oddly enough, in the midst, when we really get going with this, sometimes they won't even realize it, they'll put, a word will pop out. Or a name will pop out."

J2

14:59 ~~this for it needs to be a joint experience. But the statements, the phrases are universal, they're a fortune cookie, they're a horseshoe, you can twist and turn them into whatever you want them to be, they will seem appropriate, but it's not because they are, it's because they're universal."~~

Dr. V 2

28:10 The subject thinks that the instructor is manipulating them, but in reality, the subject is leading the work "I don't fight it. I go with them. There's another fallacy that this just brings up. Just in talking about this. That, you know, the student, or the person with whom I'm working on thinks thinks that I am manipulating them. But, in essence, I am actually, I'm actually following their lead. I'm actually going with what their body is telling me and their, you know, what's going on with them. So, you know, sometimes the,

Dr. V 2

26:45 Is there and order to the steps of the process "Some actors, some students go into a different direction and sometimes I have to just go with them. I mean they literally, physically are telling me what to do. Not verbally, but physically. And sometimes with a very angry person that when they're standing up there, and if we can't get through that mask of anger then we may as well go ahead and explore it."

Who's The

13055.7

31:51 Power vs. partnership "They're a god. I can make you laugh. I can make you cry. I can make you break down and you have no choice in the matter. I can choose how you feel. definitely can't go into it with that attitude."

31:42 "I know that sometimes it appears as if I'm manipulating it. But, in actuality, I'm just taking cues off her."

1:00:42 why do the universal emotive phrases work "I think it's manipulation. She's manipulating your mind into causing some sort of reaction, and explosion."

33:20 Whatever they bring she can work with "I'm only a guide. I can't break them or make them or make them laugh or make them cry or make them do any of it. I take what you bring to the table. And that is pretty much the same example, that's a metaphor for what they're doing to their own work. They're bringing themselves to the work. What they are. And they're going to bring all of their baggage with it too. Closed mind, open mind. They may think they have an open mind and come to it and they realize that the doors are locked. Or, they may think that they are just totally closed and walk up there and something inside of them goes, "Yes. I want to tell you everything." So they have this emotional, just, purging that happens to them and it's a surprise."

29:42 "Sometimes they'll lead me and then where they're going sometimes I will lead them away, you know, into other areas too. But I take my cues off of what the student is doing."

Dr. V's Interview, Part Two, Camera Right

00:30 The universal emotive words and phrases "Again, you're dealing with, the words are polar, or bi-polar, if you will, but the "I need" gesture is usually done with hands outward. The student is standing with hands outward and feet forward, what we call, in a neutral position. As much as we can, in a neutral mask. With the hands outward, asking, "I need." This is a very vulnerable state to be in. With hands open, this part of the body exposed, and the chest open and exposed. The vital organs all open and in a neutral mask.

18:30 Part Two: Exploring the Emotional landscape "The second part: Exploring the emotional landscape." I'm asking you to stand in a neutral position. We don't like to do this because it opens us up totally, you know, to the audience. And when you're in the focal point that when you're totally concentrating, and then to open the hands up like this is incredibly vulnerable. You did this first with your mommas. You did this first with the people you loved. You did this. The higher you go the more emotion will happen to you. It's sense memory. You remember doing it.

The Emotional Landscape

Very this section into "Part 2"

00:30

Dr. V2

covering up. Like this, or this, this. And this is a type of masking that happens. And to just be able to stand onstage and be still and to do this and then to say, "I need" takes a lot of guts to do. It also elicits emotions. Conversely, to push away, to make the body, this part of the body to push away and say, "Go away." And sometimes to be asked to stamp a foot, one foot or the other, elicits those emotions to jar also. And so you're dealing with a broad spectrum from one to ten. Meaning total vulnerability that you're dealing with from one to five, and then this very closed pushing away. You're asking people to come into to you and then at the same time you're asking it to go away from you. ~~Those are two very large, it seems very small here, but once you're onstage by yourself and in front of ten colleagues it presents you not only with these demons but your own inner demons and your inner joys too.~~

20:40 "~~You know, but it's very frightening because you begin to feel, you know, very young.~~ It's a new place in the landscape to go. And also, I'm asking the body and the psyche to take responsibility. Now, that is a challenge, you see, because now I'm going into areas that you haven't explored. You see. And that's when it gets scary for you. And then beginning to move through some things with anger. And I'll choose different things. Perhaps anger, we can do that. We can do "I need", you know, the vulnerable stuff. We do fun stuff with broccoli. You know. You know, the laughter, the fun, silliness. ~~You~~

13:36 "And then sometimes, just to throw them off-guard, if I see the control issues starting I'll just say something off the wall and I ask them to say it. Like, "Broccoli."

13:58 "If I see someone really retreating on me I'll ask them to do something that is the opposite of retreating. I'll ask them to do raspberries. Or make faces. Make faces is loads of fun. Because we're not allowed to do that in society. And it brings up another, a younger emotion, a time when we could do these things, a free, it's a freeing up time at that moment. And sometimes it's very frightening. Particularly if I've got a student that has a very, what I call the "maturity mask", or is very steady, they don't want to go outside of their own ego. And to do that for them sometimes is very hard. I think it elicits, again, a time that was free and fun and we could do it, and I'm not going to tell them not to. So. it's a freeing element."

WS F. v2

Dr. V2

Dr. V2

38:27 The ambush technique: the universal emotive words and phrases "The ambush technique. There are certain words. Words are powerful. Words bring up imagery. Words knock on the door of our emotions. More importantly, they knock on the door of your subconscious."

3:13 How method is related to emotions, emotions follow the body, a cycle "Emotions follow the body. A physical act follows the body. So that, indeed, if I ask you to stamp your feet long enough and to thrust your fists at me, the very act physically of that stirs something within us emotionally." "The body inspires the emotions. And we know now

6:45 Words and emotions leads to other words and emotions "One emotion or one word all of a sudden takes off, leads to another one. And that emotion, whether you win or lose within your brain, leads to another emotion. But what is wonderful is, these are what we call the creative juices. Your, you know, the subconscious then is beginning to work. And the feelings and the thoughts are beginning to go for you. So you don't have to do anything. You just have to let one, like a pin-ball machine, hit, you know, the flapper of the next one. You are then as we call it in the theatre, "In the Glove." You are working. You are there. You are beginning to feel it."

Dr. V. A.
D.V. 3:13
D.V. 3:13
A VV

Dr. V. A.

3

4

12

26

11:35 "Once these emotions would rise and bubble and come out she'd congratulate you, stop you, and shove you into a scene."

10:00 "The third stage is 'employing the work' in a monologue. The idea is: this is a process. And once we get the emotional gears going, once the emotions revved up, then I like to employ it into work. I want to see how it feels to put it into the monologue. At this point, usually, the biggest discovery for an actor is the difference between 'performing' and 'acting'. And I might set up that definition right now. In my estimation, 'acting' is the employment of your true feelings, your true and total empathy. To quote Stanislavsky, 'The Magic 'If.' 'It's not magic anymore. It's reality. You are there. You are using yourself. 'Performing' is mimicking an emotion, mimicking tears or laughter or crying or total joy. But, it's mimicking. Some acting teachers call it 'indicating.' I like to call it 'performing.' But, at this point in the gestalt work, while we have them, the actor revved up and using, opens emotionally available and working, to use the monologue with the emotions, they get for the first time what it's like truly to act, to use themselves."

You deal with the emotion and then she puts you in a scene to try to make you foster it and use it in your acting.

27:21 "After we've explored that, the third part is to be able then to put the emotion, to put the feelings, to put this spontaneity into work. So, the third part is with a monologue I ask the actor to put the work into a monologue and to experience what it's like to actually be feeling things while you are speaking. And this is the crux at which we, the actor usually discovers the difference between 'acting' and 'performing'. And they realize that in this sense they're really acting. They're really using themselves."

21:47 Part Three: Putting the work into the material "Then, going into the monologue. With all of you, to an extent, you wanted very badly, with all of this emotion, to still perform. You were going to perform on top of all the emotion. Did you realize that? And then, when I said, "Ah, not to worry, just say the words this time. Do it opposite. Just say the words and allow the words to hit you. See what happens." And then you went, "Wow, this is easy. Ok." And then, all of a sudden, you begin to realize, "Oh, now I'm walking the line with it. Now I'm on top of the wave. I'm not pushing the wave. I'm riding it. I'm on top of it. I don't have to push the emotion. I don't have to push the words. I just have to feel them. When I say them, see the imagery. When I say them, feel it." And you do. Ok. And you understood the difference then. That's why we do the monologue is so you can understand the difference between performing and acting, and what that means for you."

Part 3

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4:49 What the popular perception of method is today, the myths "Method acting, how the new method acting comes from several camps. In this country today there's many methodologies that are studies and actors are quick to jump and so, "Oh, I'm Eisenstein." Or, "Oh, I'm Method." Or, whatever. "Seeing that the method has been around for such a long time it has a mystique, and it has history, and it has myths. And those who have not studied it by into the myth. And it has some pretty important people in the field who have promoted the myth." "I think we've all heard the myth of, "Oh, method acting, that's where you sit in a corner and cry all the time." Or, all of a sudden you lose your ego or your personality and you turn into this person. That you go insane or, also, method 38:30 Misconceptions due to misuse of method acting "I think the most notorious examples of method acting are the ones that people remember and so, that's what they identify with as method acting. "Method actors go nuts and do all kinds of crazy stuff like stay up all night."

And, again, I think we have to work very hard as actors, in this country particularly, because, again, the publicist and the marketing people have etched out sort of a mythic idea of what an actor is about. You can't trust them because they could be acting. They may not be telling you all the truth. Do they really know who they are? Or they're just a combination of all the characters that they play? All of these myths, which are not, I would hope, are not true. We have that myth to deal with to begin with.

44:37 Preconceptions, fear of risk (actors) "I think a lot of actors are like that, "No I have my method, I have my way of doing it. I'm just going to do it my way. You go do your method stuff." You know, and I'm just like, "Let's try different things and I'll see what works for me." I know whatever I do is a combination of lots of different things."

46:37 Skeptics "There's going to be skeptics that say, "This is a bunch of emotional hoo-ha. What's the point? Why do I care if you're up there blubbering?" This is not for some one else, this is not a means of entertainment."

20:00 bodies, voices, & all sorts of training, but no help for emotions "And in this country, and in training institutions, and in conservatories, in university we have done so much work since Stanislavsky came around and then the method was developed. And we develop and we work on actor's voices and their bodies and their script and their improvisation and film techniques and style technique but no one goes near the inner life, or the psychology, or their own spirit, or the emotional work. It's taboo. And that's part of the taboo too with the method work is because it too knocks on that door. In this

Dr. N. A.

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Dr. N. A.

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Dr. N. A.

Controversy

35:57 People who don't like method acting, some actors allow themselves to be distracted by emotions from more important objectives "Yeah, I can see why people would say stuff like that... Some of them, yeah. Some of them are people that just don't like to deal with their own emotions and the idea of working that hard for something that you can fake, I guess, is repulsive to them."

38:40 Neither good or bad but a tool, how its used, find what works for you, multiple explorations of multiple techniques, schools, systems of acting "This is neither good or bad. It completely depends on how it's used. ~~Gestalt technique, if it's not right for you, if~~

26:20 It just a tool, neither good or bad, how it's used, & people who view stuff like this in poor light "A tool, in itself, is not good or bad, it's how you use it. You can use a hammer to kill somebody or you can use a hammer to build a house for the homeless. But, either way, it's a tool. It's the same way with this technique."

29:30 It's a tool, neither good or bad but its use could be "Exactly. I mean, A hammer builds buildings. But it could also kill someone if it's thrown at someone's head. And that's where I tell actors that they have to draw the line ~~in creating characters~~"

51:03 Good or bad, just a tool "How can you say something is good or bad if it has some sort of benefit to somebody?" "No, you're not supposed to do that!" "Oh, I'm bad, sorry." "You should be doing this." Well, can I just use a little bit of that and a little bit this? I mean this world, black and white. All right? But, why not take a little bit of everything? We do that with the rest of our lives. Why in our careers do we have to be black and white? In our careers we have to try everything."

13:00 Method vs. other techniques "I'm talking about the difference between the method work and other techniques. I hope I'm not sounding like I'm blasting the other ones, because I'm not." "And I steal from everybody that I can that's good."

26:06 Fear of personal commitment, controversy of method acting "I think alot of people have alot of oppinions about alot of things: especially actors." 26:30 "So actors have very strong oppinions about acting. I just don't care. I just want to do it. i just have a really good time. So you hear these criticisms, "Oh, ~~gestalt method, it's just a crying game~~." Well, if that's what you think that's fine. I don't see it that way."

26:11 Crying lessons "I can see how some people would criticize and call it crying lessons. The first time I went through the experience I would have been right on that bandwagon. These are crying lessons. It's not just crying."

trying
Lessons

5:04 "Who is a method actor, I might add. Has this ability to be available for you to be able to see his thoughts and his feelings in his face. So, I would argue it's more than crying lessons. It does appear from the outside, when one is looking at it, to be psychological derangement. I think people would argue, that had been through the process, to say, "No,

26:50 Crying lessons "Those who call method acting, call gestalt "crying lessons" may be afraid of it. They may be. Or, you know, they have very strong opinions about it. May be they feel like it's just something that should not be done. That if somebody is that, needs to be that, connected to something they just need to do it on their own. That another person shouldn't step into their life and do this.

49:33 Crying lessons "I can see why it would be referred to as crying lessons. I think it's more indicative of people in general than it is of the exercise itself. I think what the exercise does is get you in touch with whatever emotion you're trying to keep below surface. And, for most people, the least acceptable emotion to be feeling in front of people is, well, the least acceptable thing to do in front of people is cry. Maybe farting is worse, I don't know, defecating, something. The thing you try not to do the hardest, you'll yell in front of people if somebody makes you mad, and you'll laugh in front of people if somebody makes you happy. But, if somebody makes you sad, if somebody hurts you, if you're feeling hurt, you know, that makes you feel that much more vulnerable and you don't want people to know that, for the most part. It's sort of incidental that that's probably the most common suppressed emotion. So that when you do this emotional warm up, that's generally what's going to happen. Yeah, I can see why it would be called crying lessons, but I don't think that that's entirely accurate."

51:45 End

2:15 Crying lessons "It does appear that way. It does appear that way. It is a difficult process and technique to watch. It's difficult to watch. It's difficult to see people go on this emotional rollercoaster. Up, down, in, and out. And sometimes it's very boring. And it's, you know, "Come on. What are you doing?" You know. And it's, it appears to be self-indulgent. It appears to be silly. It appears to be, let's see, what else I can say negative about it? It appears to be child-like. Temper-tantrum throwing, that sort of thing. But, again, it's different when you're standing there. When you're the speaker, when you're standing in the hot-seat. When you're standing on they spot. It's different for the person going through it, because there's all this stuff that's going through them internally. And it's more than just crying lessons. Sometimes, I think, it's very easy to cry."

Crying Lessons

Q14

Q2

Q3

Q5

27:50 more than crying is the goal of the exercise. "Gestalt is not necessarily crying lessons. Crying is not the only suppressed emotion. Joy is an emotion, fear, anxiety, any of these things - if you don't dry you're not a failure. If you don't emote you're not a failure. It simply didn't pull anything out of you that time, or maybe it did, but maybe it's not huge and big, maybe it's subtle. There's definitely something to be said for subtlety."

47:37 "I'll say that a lot of actors use a lot of different techniques and a lot of different things in their training to do the things that they do and the best actors would. There are

20:23 Is it better for an actor to do it to himself or have the director do it to them in the professional setting? "I believe that actors have to be independent in that sense of knowing their craft well enough, have enough tools at their disposal so that they can do as much as they possibly can on their own." "So, I believe in training actors to be as independent as they possibly can."

44:10 What kind of attitude should an actor approach this exercise with? "I think an actor should be willing to do just about anything without compromising their beliefs. And if it means trying tactics and it means getting suggestions from a person to try something new, that you ought to try it and if you don't like it, it doesn't work for you then don't do it."

It just depends on how you use it. There are people out there who I guess would say it's wrong to manipulate people in an emotional sense. Well, that's fine. It's fine for you to believe that. There are other people out there, like me, who are willing to be, to do whatever it is that they are supposed to do to make themselves better, provided, you know, within reason. To me it is not unreasonable to risk feeling uncomfortable in front of people so that you will know how to get in touch with the emotional energy that it is going to take to have really good performance."

39:25 "Find what works for you and go with it. But don't be closed-minded. Don't say, 'I'm not going to experience this.' If you haven't found that thing that works for you yet, try everything. Try every technique. Try method, try anything."

45:30 Multiple uses of multiple techniques (what combinations of styles work best for different actors) 46:05 "You have to find your own way of doing it. And I believe, especially for me, and I believe that for a lot of people, that you take from lots of different places, and then you come up with your own."

Best of Both Worlds

More this section

into controversy

J2

R2

Dr. V3

R2

26:20

E2?

J2

R2

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Dr. V4
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17:25 Hazards of its misuse "I think horror stories abound about actors in general. And I have such a respect for the craft and for the art and for actors out there. And I hope to impart that to my students"

41:15 Hazards, his concerns about the exercise "I do have some concerns about the technique. I think it is extremely, extremely important to be trained if you're going to try something like this. It's not, and in that sense, it's not a practice technique to use in

30:42 "I don't believe in damaging or hurting any one's instrument. That is analogous, to me, to an actress. Well, you can get the role, but I want you to belt this song. And I want you to sing, and I'm demanding that you, sure, you're going to do two performances a day, belting. Well, it's going, she's going to get the Academy Award for it, sure. But it's going to damage her instrument. And, eventually, she will not be able to sing. She'll have

32:45 "There has got to be a trust. I have got to feel that this person that's on this journey with me is with me, is doing it as a collaboration to make a discovery, not as a means to mock me."

14:35 "Because a director, you know, stands to lose the confidence of an actor if they do it inappropriately. So, they have to think of all angles of what they're doing. Because, ultimately, what you want out of an actor is an excellent performance, a spontaneous one in which they can be proud of, the director can be proud of and there's a bond then that is shared between those two people."

38:45 "How can you do this and stay sane? Now every night, probably, you're not going to be able to come to this emotional pitch. Well, then you've got to rely on your technique."

13:09 "I think that an actor has to be very careful and guard their emotional life and work. I don't think that the work, this kind of work, is for everyone. I don't believe that an actor can do this kind of work all the time in a professional situation. Some nights they'll have to depend upon technique."

character. But to have to damage their instrument in any way to be able to create the character is not healthy. It is not healthy what so ever."

Dr. V4 26:12
J2
18:55 How directors can use it, hazards of misuse, professional theatre "I think that it is very dangerous for someone who does not know what they are doing, does not know

Dr. V3 13:04
I think that actors have to be wise in understanding that there are some directors and some people in the world that are not kind and, perhaps, would take advantage of their emotional capabilities."

Warning

E2 41:15 you're doing. It's, you know, the difference between a hand saw and a power saw, I guess. If you, you know, you just, that much more important that you know what you're doing. When you're dealing with a subject-like emotions where nobody really knows all 26:12 The extremist obsession with emotions can be distraction away from theatre's, play's, & character's higher objectives 'It's self-indulgence. I have little respect for those people who use this kind of work to be sado-masochistic or just have some sort of hormonal fest or emotional nightmare, whatever, and I've seen productions like that, in which this is done. And I've heard horror tales of extremes that directors will go to to make actors feel stuff or become characters, or whatever! 38:25 What attitude should an actor take toward the exercise "I think the most important attitude that you can have toward this technique, and, really, any technique, is, well, you have to respect it and use caution. When you're dealing with people's emotion it's a nebulous kind of thing."

I'm not, I don't have a very high opinion of directors that would abuse actors in that manner. And to make them uncomfortable and to abuse them in this sort of way to get to a character. I just don't, I don't believe in that. I believe it's a choice of the actor to what degree that they want to go into the psyche of a character. And how much research it is that they want to do with it. And I think that's their choice to go into. But I, I'm concerned about the extreme measures to the end. If you were sort of a malicious person who enjoyed having power over people, yeah, you could get them up in front of people and make them wither and cry. And, great, you've misused the tool. Or,

26:20 26:12 the actor and the director need therapy. They need psychotherapy. They're not a candidate for the gestalt work for actors. They're a candidate for therapy beyond what an acting teacher can do. It's dangerous. You're working with someone's emotions and you got to be sensitive. 39:10 End

E2 41:15 you're the guide, if you're actually running the gestalt exercise. I mean, think about it. How much would it take to push a schizophrenic right over the edge? But, how do you recognize that sort of thing? So, in that sense it's not a practice thing to use. It's important, important, important, I think, to be well trained.

16:50 "I don't think she goes over the limit. I think she knows when to stop, but she knows which buttons to touch."

12:00 When it works best "It works best when the student has an amount of respect and trust for the person who's doing the gestalt on them. Too, that has to be established also. But the biggest thing that has to be established, also, is for this is work for the character."

42:58 "And, probably it's a good idea to know your subject, yes. Because, or at least to be able to recognize certain characteristics about your subject. But, the better you know your subject, the more they're going to trust you, probably. Unless you're just a jerk and the better they know you the more they hate you. In which case you got no business doing it anyway."

9:00 Each student reacts differently, she knows them before she does this "Every person is different. Every student is different. They will react differently. What I trust from being an actor and director and a human being is that when they're up there they'll react to the situation. A lot of the times I know them well enough by that point. I don't do gestalt work on people I do not know. I have usually have had a student for at least a semester before I begin the gestalt work, if not a year. And I know them pretty well. I know, I pretty much surmise, I know how they're going to react. But what I do is to allow the situation to work on them."

34:10 Instructor/Student/Group Relationship "You build a relationship so strongly with your students ahead of time you know what you can do and what you can't do." "The relationship with the instructor to that individual student, individual student with the rest of the group, the instructor with the rest of the group while it's happening with the individual student, it's imperative."

21:36 "So, again, there is a time and place and a I think that a director and an actor and a teacher when you work with this kind of work, and when we do the kind of work that we do we have to protect, you know, treat one another's hearts as if they were our own. And at the same time challenge one another's hearts to grow and to face and to see maybe the wrong or the good or to get us outside of our comfort zone, but not go too far. And that really demands maturity and wisdom to know how far to go."

second semester. And my answer is, "The sooner you get the correct training to a person, the faster they're going to be, you know, on the right track." My second answer, again, is, "If you wait too long, they'll learn bad habits. So, learn how to 'perform' tears or 'mimic' an emotion and not really feel it."

29:21 appropriate "So, Where does gestalt come in? I think it's a very personal thing." "In an academic setting, say college or graduate school, probably, better yet, we have special classes, I think, for this sort of thing. "Ok, this is a semester of special projects on method acting with and extension of gestalt method." Or, "In our advanced level acting class we're going to spend several weeks studying gestalt, and I'm going to work with you one on one. Does that make you comfortable or uncomfortable?"

23:28 feasibility of the exercise in academic, public school, community, professional theatre "As far as gestalt and the feasibility in educational theatre, I think that's the perfect place for it." "But in college, I think that's where we're supposed to be discovering what tools we have to work with, what our instrument is. That's the time for it. That's the perfect time for it." "You need to learn how to be able to have this emotion. That should

33:50 How feasible its use is in professional, academic, public school, community theatre "In professional theatre you're supposed to already know what you're doing as an actor." "I think, as a professional, you should, sort of, already be past that."

29: 35 Professional & community theatre (w- references to college) "This is why I think it's great for the college atmosphere, because once you get into a professional theatre they're not going to have a whole lot of time to sit around and gestalt you." "Your job as an actor is to tap into those emotions." "Because you're supposed to come in there with all your facilities ready. ~~their job is simply to incorporate it as a whole. Now, in the~~

15:53 "But I think that it is a learning tool to get to the emotions and to learn to work with the emotions. I don't think that this is a professional theatre, that it has its genesis there. I think it's a learning technique. And it's, probably, either first explored in the academy and then in the conservatory setting, I think."

42:23 "That's why this is perfect for the university setting. This is a discovery. This is the time that you get to wallow. This is time that you get to find these emotions and play with them and tinker around and find out, I mean, the cliché: "You're discovering who you are. You're out to find out." This is the age, this is the time, this is when it should be done."

26:22 "It requires some basic skills before you even get there. It requires that the person, I think, have a pretty good sense of identity."

27:10 "Training, skill, and life experience."

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Academic
Notes

Dr. 13

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Dr. 13

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25:09 academic more so than professional theatre "A certain skill level if they're intending to pursue it further and a willingness to explore new things, obviously, or they wouldn't be, you know, trying to educate themselves in the first place." "In educational theatre, yeah, you're suppo-theoretically you're supposed to be open to anything. So, yeah, I think it's much more conducive to educational theatre than professional or community theatre."

18:04 Poorly trained gestalters

18:26 "It is a training technique. So, I would argue that this is best suited in a college/university setting in which accountability is there. I have great respect for the work and I don't think that it should be abused."

35:46 "Most of the people in a college theatre class are committed to theatre and are going to be trustworthy in that sense. That they're going to understand why you would choose to gestalt somebody or be gestalted."

16:33 "I think that gestalt work should be done in the academy because there's accountability. You have a professor, who probably, you'd hope, has been trained, has a background in training, who is working with a school psychologist, just in case something would happen, or they need some additional work or help with a student. And, you know, in a rare case that that would ever happen. I have never had that happen. But, also, the fact that there is continuity. In that you are taking a class, and a accountability, everyone in the class should go through the gestalt work. And what happens for the actor is that

35:22 "But it was always in the clinical environment of the classroom that we used gestalt techniques. So, I think that that's really where it has to stay. And only for serious students."

15:10 Is academia the indigenous environment for this exercise "It was taught to me in academia. And I thought, I think it was taught to my teacher in a conservatory setting. So I believe that this work is, the genesis of it is, most probably, in the academic setting."

College
University
Academia

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Dr. 13

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Dr. 13

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Dr. 13

(37)

Attitude

27:42 What she thought the first time she saw this work "The first time that I saw this work, and I was a student, and I had gone to dance school and finished a BFA in professional dance and then the next year I went into acting school and I saw this I was horrified. I thought, "What have I gotten myself into? Dear Mom, there is this crazy woman who is asking us to stand up here and cry, scream, yell, and snot, and some people throw up, and we have to sit through this." And I thought, "This is insane. What is is?" 'Cause it looks horrible. And she wrote back, "School looked horrible to you when you were five. Try it." So, I was very frightened of the work when I saw it.

30:05 What kind of attitude should a subject bring to the work, disclosure "You have to have a sense of adventure. And that's the way that I like to put it." "I'm not going to tell you what to think." "And this is a totally new process. Of course you're going to be curious. Of course you're going to be a little frightened. Of course you're going to be skeptical. Of course you're going to be judgemental. You're a student. You're supposed to be learning. So it brings that baggage with it." "So, what I like to say is, "Think of it as and adventure."

24:33 Skeptics "I think, and I have had students that have gone through the work just to, because they knew, they were frightened for their grades. And even then, I think, they were surprised that they got something out of it. I've never had someone to walk away from this experience and say, "So?" I've never had that happen. But I also know that the work is not for everyone. That it's not what they want to do. It's not the level or the commitment that they care to explore their characters or with their work." "Not everyone is going to be suited for this work."

25:00 requirements of subjects' skill, experience, maturity "You need to go into it with an open mind and ambition." "If you're not in the right frame of mind all you've done is had an exhausting, emotional experience. What's the point?" "If you're doing it just strictly as an actor in an exercise and trying to better yourself you need to be in the right place for that."

is fine

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Dr. V

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28:18 "I think you have to be very, very wise. I think the person practicing the gestalt has to know and evaluate the student to say, "Yes, this is a candidate for the work. No, this person is not ready yet." And it maybe just another semester, until, or, a little bit of time, before they are ready for the work."

6:25 "This is not a technique that can be practiced without training. Also, and I think that's something else that needs to be stated too. I always recommend that someone has had training in this needs to at least have been with the work for a year."

26:32 When an actor is ready to do this "At the same time there's an argument for maturity. When is this, um, time to do it? I find that, even at the college level, not all people are ready. And it's, they're perfectly sane. And they're perfectly stable to be able, psychologically, to be able to do the work. But they're not mature enough to embrace the work yet. And it's not going to really do them any good. They would see it as being silly or funny or weird and not really embrace the work when they can. And I think that there is some timing element involved. I think that there is a right time for everyone to be able to do this work. I think you know this in our lives."

29:00 What attitude the subject should bring to the exercise "Actor's should have an open mind and be ambitious about the experience, really want and desire to accomplish something for themselves, not for the acceptance of their peers, or for the admiration of the professor that's doing the exercise for them. You need to be self-involved in this experience. You need to get out of it every little drop that you can for yourself. That's

32:30 "But I like the adventuresome spirit. I think that that opens people up to the unexpected. To see what their boundaries are like. To see where they have drawn lines in the sand that they didn't even know that they had drawn. And that leads them to this self-discovery that within them are horizons and worlds they never thought about. And sometimes they're surprised at what they find. And they're encouraged by it. And they begin to realize who they are as human beings and become more accepting of that."

Dr. V. 3

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Dr. V. 3

Dr. V. 3

J. 2

Dr. V. 2

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5:42 What defines a session as a success "If the student has embraced at least some of their fears, some of the emotions that are outside of their comfort zone, and also explored the ones that are comfortable for them, and if they at least recognize the impact of being onstage by themselves, what that's like to be up there by yourself, and to understand, at least, some of their masks. And thought that becomes self-knowledge. That is a success. If any amount of self-knowledge comes out of it then that's successful. ~~Not everybody is going to cry. Not everyone is going to come to anger. Not everyone is going to feel just a total bliss. Some that go through it the first time, may have just a little bit. The door may open and then they may run. And then the second time the really opens. But the fact of the matter is, some things that appear successful to you and I may not be the big thing for them. It could be something very, very subtle. One can also say that it is a success if they stand up there and go through the work. That they're strong enough to go through that.~~"

9:20 "Only the actor knows for sure if the session was a success. Only the actor knows for sure. That's quite right. This is very, I can't give a grade on this work. I mean, "You cried, that's an 'A'. You threw up, that's a 'B'." You know, I can't do that. It's not, gestalt work goes outside the bounds of academia. It's a gift. And I'm sure that there are a lot of educators who would question me on that. In saying, "What value is this?" I'll have to let my students who've gone through the work tell you what the value is. ~~But the success to them is based upon what they got out of it and how much they can carry forward on it. This is not something that can be measured. Again, I accuse the western~~

giving
Dr. K. M. J.

giving

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Conclusions

51

19:45 how actors can use the exercise, what it teaches them to do (emote) ~~almost essential to have an emotion~~ ~~I think it's~~ Like I said, if you can't have an emotion in real life, how can you portray one onstage? How can you have one onstage instead of just faking it? For an actor to be able to tap into, to break down the walls and the masks that we have to wear everyday to put up this great facade so that people will believe we are completely in control... in order to tear those down and have an emotion, I mean, by doing that it's going to make you such a better actor, so much more believable, because you will be able to have an emotion, you won't have to say, "This is what my character would look like ~~were she really upset.~~" ~~You can be really upset. It's a freedom, I think. It's freeing. It's~~ ~~empowering.~~ ~~You have this sense of, "I can do this. I can have an emotion. I can feel however I want to feel. I can do whatever I want to do."~~ And the stage, that's why a lot of us are there. We love the art we love the stage. We love to be able to go onstage and have

51

19:45 the freedom to express things that in normal life we would be shunned for. To do things that in everyday life would be unheard of. Onstage you can do that. People want you to do that. They want to see you have an emotion so that they can for a split second live vicariously, say, "This is what I could be like if I could tear down my walls and break all those blocks and be able to have a true emotion. That's who I'd want to be. That's I want I." it gives them that little spark that they're missing. And without being able to have these emotions, faking it, portraying, you cheat them, you cheat yourself."

25:04 "So, it's good to talk with the audience, because you begin to have a new perception of what your audience is about for you. And then it comes full circle. When we go back to the beginning you won't feel as likely to bring your baggage with you. "I don't have to perform for you. I don't have to entertain you. I don't have to be the intellectual with you. I don't have to be shy." All this, you don't bring the masks. Once you've seen you've been retrained to the stage you come bringing all of yourselves to us. You bring your body. You bring your mind. You bring your emotions. You bring your spirit. And to quote the gestalt works, "The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts." And so, when you are working with all of your parts, and as you could see up here you were just magnetized. You were using the whole person, the whole performer. You're not using a machine that has one piece missing. You look at all of it."

46:16 And control is the key factor there. To me it's very important to maintain control as an actor onstage, on camera, whatever. You have to have control of the situation. Because it is a constructed situation and there are certain goals that the play has to get across. And if something breaks down you got to be able to pick up and make sure that these objectives get accomplished. And if that means skipping a couple of lines where your character yells and screams so that you can go and make sure that this flat over here doesn't fall. Yeah, it is, to me, objectives are more important than emotions. And that may make me less of a method actor than some people. But, to me, control is the most important issue."

34:01 "One of the myths again from method actors is that they'll, you know, they'll be out of control. And sometimes that's the same myth with the gestalt work. Or "Once these emotions start, aren't they just going to flood you?" Or "Are they going to go out of control?" Or, whatever. It's just the opposite. If you have the ability to exercise these muscles to express your emotions you know your limits. You know what you can and cannot do. And in the long run it produces an actor that is, I think, very mature, wise, selective, and empathic, not only to himself or herself but to humanity. They understand how to use and develop their emotions."

Emotions

very

More

Important

than objects

Self-indulgent

Myths

of Method

Acting

WS Final

E2

Dr. V.S.

39.20 that, again, the actor is learning that, "Wow, to cry is not weak. To scream is not exposing myself. To care and to love unconditionally and wholeheartedly with abandonment, you know, is not, I will not lose myself." I mean, these are tremendous lessons to be learned in two square feet, you know, in a very safe environment, ~~and it's very freeing~~, I think, to an actor, and at the same time, very mature.

00.03 long-term benefits of the gestalt work. And, as I said, when you've been the work, being vaccinated. It lasts for a lifetime. And it has ongoing effects for the actor throughout his career, particularly, or her career, particularly if they continue to do the work. And what happens I think ultimately, or accumulatively, for the actor is that the work results in a form of emotional intelligence and an athleticism. You become an emotional gymnast almost, and being, and but, a guru with that too. Being able to have the wisdom, the flexibility, the versatility, and the maturity to be able to use your emotional self well and employ that within characters. And thus, again, the gestalt idea of using the whole self and that the whole, being greater than the parts, indeed, to me, this is the missing link, the missing work out of all of the acting techniques known in the world today. We have to employ using the emotional side of that. And I think that what we lack, ~~not only in acting, but in all of our culture, in the western culture, is a sense of emotional intelligence.~~

16:24 "And, as I said, the long term benefits from the work, these are actors that can become open and emotionally available to directors on a dime, in a take. Or take after take after take after take. And that's what directors want, the ability to work like that. And able to use all of themselves, as I said. Eventually, I think that it creates an emotionally mature, strong, and versatile actor, one that is going to be able to work in a lot of different realms."